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ABSTRACT

The "Families and Schools: A Global Perspective for a Multicultural Society" conference hosted over 500 people from 40 states and 16 countries who shared information and explored aspects of multicultural education. Sixty-one of the more than 100 workshop and roundtable presenters responded to the request for summaries of their presentations. These articles are organized alphabetically by primary author. Many common threads are apparent in the presentations. Many focus on parent involvement in the schools, and many recognize the necessity of understanding and acknowledging the diverse perspectives of immigrants and minority groups in urban schools and throughout the country. Some articles offer specific advice to teachers faced with increasing diversity; others highlight different problems faced by the family today, emphasizing those faced by the minority family. Still other papers consider aspects of multiculturalism in other countries, whose problems and solutions may offer much to the U.S. educator facing cultural diversity and the challenges of involving parents. Each summary contains a capsule biography of the presenter. (SLD)

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ED 395 051

Proceedings

Families and Schools
A Global Perspective for a Multicultural Society

October 26 - 29, 1994
Oakland, CA

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d their contribution to that process is critical [illegible] ccess [illegible] Rolfe]Early, active family involvement with
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ol students shows parents who are consistently informed about their children's progress enhance the child's potentia
ent. [Judith Heumann]Empowering people means giving them a real voice in what we do, and that means that all
he courage to take risks, to step out and encourage others to do something that they haven't done before. This means
associations have to be prepared to recognize [illegible] all our credentialist view of professions may
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ularly. We know that reading aloud is the most profoundly influential thing you can do to make sure that your ch
good reader and a good student. We cannot expect only the parent to change and to learn, we must also expect the
nd to learn and to open up to parents in ways they have not before. [Madeleine May Kunin] Stay in touch with t
here, find out what they are doing, find out what is working and find out what is not working -and why. Don't
form your partnerships. Network and collabor [illegible] on programs and projects. We all need to work
guson]Some people express their anxiety and frustration with anger, some people by turning away or giving up.
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quity demands th [illegible] at we're [illegible] we never let up in terms of
to go. [Angela Blackwell]Family involvement has been something that has really been critical in my life since I
as a year and a half and it was really because of the involvement of my parents that I'm here today. [Judith Heuma

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The Center for the Study of Parent Involvement (CSPI) serves as a national information clearinghouse and provides training and technical assistance to parent associations, educators and community leaders. Funding for the Center is provided by the James Irvine Foundation, the Walter S. Johnson Foundation, the Koret Foundation and individual and corporate donations.

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John F. Kennedy University is one of the first institutions in the United States dedicated solely to adult education. Since 1964 more than 20,000 adults have attended classes, with more than 5,000 men and women holding JFKU degrees. Students range in age from the 20s to the 70s, with an average age of 37. Seventy percent are women. In 1992, the Center for the Study of Parent Involvement moved its headquarters to the University's Graduate School of Professional Psychology.

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The National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE) is dedicated to the development of family/school partnerships in schools throughout the United States. Its mission is to advocate for the involvement of parents in their children's education and to foster relationships between home, school and community that enhance the education of all our nation's young people.

Families and Schools
A Global Perspective for a Multicultural Society

October 26 - 29, 1994
Oakland, CA

Proceedings

⁂

Editors

Daniel Safran
Edie Charlot

SPECIAL THANKS

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Conference Coordinator

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This conference brings to all of us a wonderful opportunity to focus for three entire days on families and schools and to engage in a dialogue about families and schools on a local, district, state, national and international level.
- Sue Ferguson, Chair, National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education Washington, DC

Here, in this place where we have all come together with a common purpose, you have a special chance to help build and restore our families, our communities, this nation, this world.
- Dave Dawson, Acting Superintendent of Schools, California Department of Education, Sacramento, CA

What you are undertaking is not just important for quality of education in this state and in this country. Educating for Multi-Culturalism means trying to develop an active and lived appreciation of what it's like to live in one world.
- Eugene Rolfe, Secretariat, International Year of the Family, Vienna, Austria

The challenge of urban education is the challenge of how to educate all of the children. We don't think there's any way to get there unless we commit to equitable outcomes.
- Angela Blackwell, President, Urban Strategies Council, Oakland, CA

Someone said that there are only 2 things that really overcome international prejudice, the first one is education and the other is laughter. And that is a piece of what this conference is all about.
- Michael Stewart, Chair, International Year of the Family Patron Cities Conference, Salt Lake City, UT

As you meet and share information at this wonderful gathering over the next couple of days, I ask that you remember that the family is the place where the child first learns about independence. Whatever you can do to support healthy family interaction, whatever you can do to provide families with confidence, information about disability and related issues, in their own language, and support when they need it, you will be directly contributing to the independence of the disabled child.
- Judith Heumann, Assistant Secretary of Education, US Department of Education, Washington, DC

We can show, in conferences like this and in the work you are doing in all of these wonderful projects, that a balance between a common core and diversity can, in fact, be achieved.

- Don Davies, Co-Director, Center for Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, Boston, MA

In the Los Angeles unified school district alone more than 200 different home languages and dialects are spoken by the students in the public schools. California's strength and California's challenge is that it is a microcosm of the global and multicultural society that this conference is addressing .

- Dave Dawson

When one looks at the achievements of the International Year of the Family, one of the most important is that it served to bring people from so many professions, from so many disciplines, from so many cultures, from so many places of the world together to talk about one thing: families....People don't live as isolated units. People who serve children became more and more sensitive to the fact that children don't exist as individual units somehow afloat in a world unconnected to other things. The interconnectedness of people to one another is the thing that the International Year of The Family is really all about.

- Eugene Rolfe

You are a group that has clout, and you are a group that has credibility,
and your voices are being heard at every level.
- Madeleine May Kunin, Deputy Secretary of Education,
US Department of Education, Washington, DC

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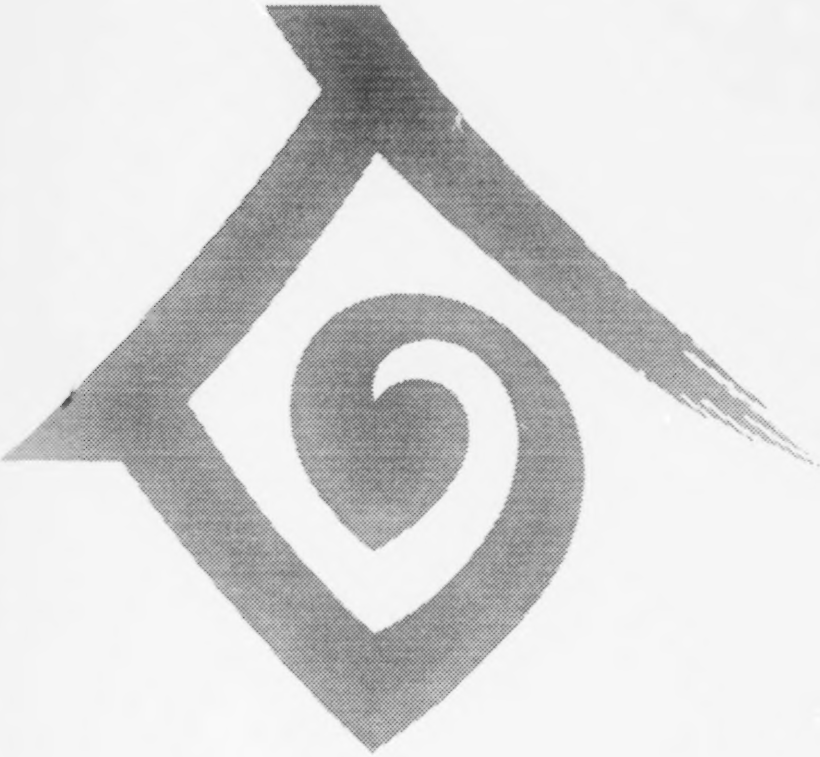

The Emblem of the International Year of the Family

"A Heart sheltered by a roof, liked by another heart, to symbolize life and love in a home where one finds warmth, caring, security, togetherness, tolerance and acceptance. The open design is meant to indicate continuity with a hint of uncertainty. The brushstroke, with its open line roof, completes an abstract symbol representing the complexity of the family."

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PREFACE

Families and Schools: A Global Perspective for a Multicultural Society was a wonderful event! Over 500 people from 40 states and 16 countries came to Oakland, California in October 1994, to hear from practitioners, parents, policymakers and researchers. Participants also used the conference to share information about their own professional and personal lives and to enjoy one another.

As you read the *Proceedings*, I hope you get a sense of the many common themes and diverse circumstances that characterized the conference experience. Sixty of the more than 100 workshop and roundtable presenters responded to our request to submit summaries for these Proceedings. The articles are organized alphabetically, by primary author.

Edie Charlot and I had the enjoyable task of reading and editing each summary. In almost every case our efforts were limited to "pouring" the summary into a consistent format. Occasionally, in order to maintain brevity and assure readability, we adjusted sentences and deleted paragraphs. We apologize in advance for any errors that may have resulted from our efforts.

An event like the Families and Schools Conference could not have occurred without the cooperation and hard work of many individuals, groups and organizations. We owe a debt of appreciation to our national and regional partners, funders, committee members and volunteers identified elsewhere in these *Proceedings*.

I would like to pay special tribute to

- Angela Blackwell, Don Davies, Warlene Gary, Keith Geiger, Judith Heumann, Madeleine May Kunin, Michael Stewart and Kathryn Whitfill, our keynote speakers;
- Sue Ferguson, Chair of the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, our Washington, D.C. based "transcontinental partner;"
- Ron Levinson, Dean of John F. Kennedy University's Graduate School of Professional Psychology, whose love for people and institutional support expedited our efforts;
- Eugene Rolfe, Secretariat for the International Year of the Family in Vienna whose worldly knowledge and encouragement helped make this a truly international event;
- Marcia Jaffe, Conference Coordinator Extraordinaire, whose competence and good spirit are the secrets to our success;
- Sharon Walker, Yvette Flores-Ortiz, Nancy Pede and Angie Cutonilli, CSPI's small but rugged staff who made everything possible;
- A special thanks to my co-editor, Edie Charlot whose warmth and style continues to contribute to our success;

All of the parents and educators who shared their work and spirit with us.

Daniel Safran, Ph.D., Director
Center for the Study of Parent Involvement

LETTERS

John F. Kennedy University was founded with the belief that access to education is a lifelong right for all who earnestly seek it. We are dedicated to mature students who want to continue their education, find new directions and discover higher meanings for their lives. As one of the nation's first universities to emphasize education for the mature adult, we pride ourselves on being a place where a motivated person can receive a quality education while honoring job, civic and home responsibilities

Lifelong learning and community service are fundamental concepts that have guided the university since its founding 30 years ago. Today the university's five schools enroll approximately 1,800 students in degree and certificate programs in the fields of liberal arts, management, psychology, holistic studies and law.

The relationship between families and schools is a subject of critical importance in our changing world. I am proud of the role JFKU's Center for the Study of Parent Involvement played in organizing and hosting Families and Schools: A Global Perspective for a Multicultural Society. The work done by the university's staff, students and volunteers and the collaboration of over 100 national and regional organizations helped bring about a unique and remarkable event.

Charles E. Glasser, JD, President
John F. Kennedy University

On behalf of the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE), it is a great pleasure to present to you the conference proceedings from "Families and Schools: A Global Perspective for a Multicultural Society" which took place on October 26-29, 1994 in Oakland, California. It was a wonderful success.

This conference was the dream of Dan Safran, Director of the Center for the Study of Parent Involvement at John F. Kennedy University in Orinda, California and it became a reality through the collaborative work of hundreds of individuals and groups who know how critical families and communities are to children's academic success and seek stronger family/school/community partnerships to enhance their learning. We appreciate the efforts of everyone who participated in each phase of planning for this conference, including all the members of the conference planning committee, as well as those at the Center for the Study of Parent Involvement who carried the plans to fruition. We know the time and energy it takes to put on a conference of such magnitude! Special thanks, of course, to each presenter for their valuable perspective and knowledge and thanks to all who came to participate. The conference would never have been successful without supporters who not only attended the conference, but through participation in workshops and informal networking with one another, greatly enhanced the information presented and overall spirit of the conference.

Presenters from the United States and around the world shared a wealth of knowledge and experience on a wide range of topics such as school-based collaboration with families, organizational tools for multicultural communities, education and support training, and skills and strategies needed to develop family/school/community partnerships. We are extremely grateful to each and every one of them.

We know the time has come to take positive action to promote children's learning through the development of family/school/community partnerships. The U.S. Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, has launched the Family Involvement Partnerships for Children's Learning and Goal 8 of Goals 2000, Educate America Act calls on schools to "promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement." Successful partnerships are emerging around the country and around the world and this conference provided us with the first of what we hope will be many opportunities to come together to share our knowledge and experiences and to learn from one another.

Very special thanks to John F. Kennedy University for hosting this conference. NCPIE is grateful for all of your support!

Sue Ferguson, Chair
National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE)

Strengthening Family-School-Community Partnerships Through After-School Programs

Mary Sue Ammon
and Sharon K. Junge
University of California
Cooperative Extension

INTRODUCTION

The Cooperative Extension Service was established in 1914 to encourage land grant universities to provide free or at-cost research-based information to the public. Educational programs and materials developed by university based specialists and researchers are delivered primarily by local county-based agriculture, home economics and youth development professionals. Recently, the issues of unsupervised children and declining family structures have been addressed by Cooperative Extension through applied research, project development and testing, and educational dissemination of research-generated knowledge and materials. As part of its Youth- at-Risk Initiative, Cooperative Extension has started or assisted School-Age Child Care (SACC) programs in high-risk communities across the nation. The intent of these programs is not just to keep children out of trouble, but to actively promote their positive development.

SUMMARY

All 4-H SACC programs emphasize experiential education and utilize a "learn by doing" approach that is age-appropriate and developmentally sound in teaching and directing youth. Research- based curricula on over 70 topics are incorporated in daily activities. Greater awareness and appreciation of societal issues are also emphasized. And it is important to note that improved parenting skills, adult-child relationships and community involvement have been major goals of the program. A recently completed impact study confirms that these programs are having multiple, positive impacts on children, their families and their schools. For example, school principals and classroom teachers as well as after-school staff reported increased pro-social behaviors, reduced problem behaviors, improved academic behaviors, better attendance and fewer retentions among children participating in the programs. Principals reported that there was decreased vandalism around the schools and surrounding neighborhoods.

The presenters shared experiences and details of these program outcomes. They focussed especially on the unique role after-school programs play in strengthening family-school- community partnerships. To this end they provided concrete examples of the ways after-school programs can enhance communication linkages between schools and families, provide parent education for diverse audiences, promote positive family interaction and enhance the total educational program for school-age children. For example, information was shared on the use of Family Activity Nights, Parent Resource Centers, and Friday Finales as effective ways to encourage parent involvement in after-school programs.

Entire families take part in hands-on reading, math, computer or science activities during Family Activity Nights. These monthly workshops promote interaction within and between families and facilitate the informal sharing of parenting information. Friday Finales, in which a display of children's work is set up to be viewed informally while parents enjoy refreshments and conversation with the staff before taking their children home, encourage communication between parents and staff and provide ways for parents to discuss school activities with their children. The Parent Centers feature parent education materials, communications such as newsletters and flyers, a community resource directory and "Parent Swap" bulletin board, and materials such as children's books and videos which may be borrowed. Family Loaner Backpacks have been quite successful in supplementing weekly lessons and fostering parent-child interaction in fun and educational ways. These backpacks include books, manipulatives, games and other resource materials based on themes taught in the after-school programs.

Special attention was paid to describing ways programs can be designed to meet the needs of Hispanic families. For example, a series of bilingual one-page newsletters for parents of children in the SACC programs suggests easy applications of parenting principles. Participants also received an in-depth introduction to a newly developed resource that can help teachers, parent groups, librarians, other educational projects, as well as after-school programs inform, communicate with and involve families educationally. Some books and activities from the "Leamos Juntos/Let's Read Together" program were demonstrated. This bilingual shared reading curriculum, designed by Mary Sue Ammon, Family Development Associate, and Judy Collier, bilingual resource teacher, is organized around six children's books that are written in both Spanish and English. Each of the six units has components for three different settings (home, school and daycare) and consists of reproducible guides and activities for family reading workshops, primary classrooms and after-school or other informal group settings.

The workshop concluded with a summary of the way the activities fit into the framework established by the California State Board of Education's Policy on Parent Involvement and thus represent a broad range of partnership opportunities. Finally, information was shared about ways educational professionals might access some of these Cooperative Extension resources and obtain further information about adapting them to their own needs.

PRESENTERS

Mary Sue Ammon, Ph.D., is a Family Development Associate for Cooperative Extension at the University of California Berkeley, and has also been coordinating the University of California Project for Enhancing Teacher Preparation for Parent Involvement.

Sharon K. Junge is County Director and 4-H Youth Development Advisor for the University of California Cooperative Extension in Placer and Nevada Counties, and is the Western Regional Director for the Extension National Child Care Network for Action.

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The Year of the Family comes at an important time in the history of the UN and it comes at an important time in the history of this planet.
- Eugene Rolfe

Connecticut's Family Resource Centers

Gilbert Andrada
Connecticut State Department
of Education

INTRODUCTION

Connecticut's Family Resource Center Program is a statewide implementation of the "Schools of the 21st Century" model of comprehensive, integrated, community-based child development and family support services based at public schools. This model was developed by Dr. Edward Zigler, the Director of the Bush Center for Child Development and Social Policy at Yale University. In December 1988, the Connecticut Legislature passed legislation allocating funding for the establishment and coordination of three demonstration Family Resource Centers administered by the Connecticut State Department of Human Services and Connecticut State Department of Education. Soon afterward, the program grew to nine centers. Since that time, the Connecticut State Department of Education secured a Federal Family Resource and Support grant to expand the program to eighteen centers and conduct an extensive program evaluation.

SUMMARY

The program is comprised of seven basic components:

- *Full-time Preschool Child Care*: offered year-round at a minimum of 11 hours per day for children 3-5 years of age.
- *School-Age Child Care:* offered during the hours before and after the school day and operating full-time during the summer and when school is not in session.
- *Families in Training*: an integrated approach of home visiting, group meetings, and monitoring of child development for new and expectant parents.
- *Adult Education*: a range of adult education services including English as a Second Language (ESL), Basic Literacy Skills and Parent and Child Education (PACE), a parent training and adult education program for parents who have not received a high school diploma.
- *Support and Training for Family Day Care Providers:* support for a continuum of child care opportunities for families. Family day

care providers are offered workshops, support groups, and referral services.

- *Positive Youth Development Services:* aimed at children in grades 4-6 and offering a range of recreational and educational opportunities targeted at preventing teen pregnancy, substance abuse and dropping out of school.
- *Resource and Referral Services*: Family Resource Centers, by their location and access to families, have established themselves as a primary resource and referral service for issues pertaining to the well-being of families.

Family Resource Centers embody the underlying concept that healthy development and good education begin with access to quality child care and support services from birth. This concept, articulated in the design for the School of the 21st Century program, proposes the development of a system for child care and family support that takes advantage of the physical accessibility of the school. The model does not require that family support and child care be incorporated into the educational system, but rather enables the provision of such services under the auspices of the school. The school is an institution that is known to, recognized by and accessible to all families. For parents whose schooling experiences were positive, Family Resource Centers are an acknowledgment and endorsement of these parents' trust in schools. For those parents who have not been successful in school, Family Resource Centers represent a unique opportunity to "win those parents back," and therefore increase the educational outcomes for their children.

The vision guiding the Family Resource Centers is to prevent an array of childhood and adolescent problems by strengthening effective family management practices and establishing a continuum of child care and support services that children and parents need. By making effective use of public school buildings, Family Resource Centers are able to take advantage of the geographic catchment area served by the school. It is important to note that Connecticut's Family Resource Centers serve all families who reside in the service area regardless of income. All families need support, especially families with young children. This philosophical foundation is designed to provide the best possible start for children and families of all racial, ethnic and socio economic groups living in communities in which Family Resource Centers operate. FRCs provide a common ground for all families to benefit from the services offered, and a unique opportunity for families of diverse cultures and backgrounds to share and learn from each other.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

One of the most important effects of having a Family Resource Center in a school is that school becomes part of the lives of the adults in the family as well as the children. Furthermore, because, on the whole, the service offerings fill needs that families across all socioeconomic, racial and ethnic groups have, parents of the widest variety have an opportunity to interact. Thus, in addition to the family-school relationship, the greater community relationships are also strengthened. Parents who are involved in schools are typically middle-class persons who, generally, had a good school experience. Family Resource Centers provide a safe setting for other groups of parents to begin to explore the ways that they may be able to participate in their children's education at the school. Parents, for example, who originally entered into the ESL component return to be involved in many ways at the school that houses their Family Resource Center, including serving as aides in ESL classes. Teachers and administrators working in schools served by resource centers report an increase in parental involvement in their schools and classrooms, while parents similarly express that they are more comfortable interacting with school staff, thereby making their involvement a more natural extension of their daily lives.

Parent involvement in the school begins early. New parents, for example, are greeted by the resource center staff with a letter congratulating them and outlining the services that the centers offer. Parents are told that a desk will be ready for their child in five years but, in the meantime, the center can support them as the first and most important teacher of their child. At play-groups, the children become familiar with the surroundings of the school as well as their future classmates while parents get to know each other and, with the school staff, begin to develop the supportive relationships that will carry them throughout the school-life of their children. Parents can have some of their needs met as well. The integration of services means that parents can, for example, attend basic literacy or GED classes while their children receive care. The one-stop shopping aspect of the centers also smoothes over some transportation issues. Everyone goes to the same place, albeit for different things. Parents and school staff can relate on non school-related issues; although it may seem a minor point, parents and teachers, having already established a personal relationship, can work together to solve problems and can have an opportunity to develop a partnership in the schooling of their children.

Currently, Connecticut's Family Resource Center Program is conducting an extensive program evaluation in order to capture what has been noticed by so many of the parents, center staff and school staff. Of special interest are implementation and impact issues as well as outcomes such as parental involvement.

PRESENTER

Gilbert Andrada is an Education Service Specialist working in the Program Evaluation Unit of the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Evaluation and Student Assessment. He is the measurement and evaluation consultant to the Bureau of Early Childhood Education and Social Services and is the Evaluation Manager of the Family Resource Center program evaluation.

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> *There's no institution that plays a bigger role than the family in preparing young people to take advantage of opportunities. It's the families who often make the decisions about schools; it's the families, as a result of their income, who are able to provide certain opportunities -or they're not able to provide certain opportunities. It's the healthiness of families that often is going determine whether or not that child is going to be healthy.*
>
> *- Angela Blackwell*

Family Focus for School Success

Jean Anthony
Redwood City School District

INTRODUCTION

Family Focus for School Success (Family Focus) is a comprehensive early intervention effort, preschool through third grade, designed to provide individualized parent/family education and support for low-income members of the Redwood City (California) community. The majority of the participants are Latino. The Family Focus program was designed to accomplish three primary goals:

- to improve the socio-emotional competence of parents and children involved in the program;
- to improve the school adjustment of students at risk of school failure; and
- to improve the school achievement among those children served by the program.

SUMMARY

Family Focus is a three-pronged program; it includes three distinct, yet integrated service delivery models:

Home Education: some intervention services for preschool-aged children and their families who have a high potential for failing school because of complex environmental factors which cannot be mitigated without external support. Weekly, individualized home visits utilize a year-long curriculum which is reflective of current thinking about early childhood education and development as well as community needs.

Mental Health: school-based mental health services for kindergarten through third grade students and their families. Students are referred by their classroom teachers for behaviors which interfere with academic progress. Students are served individually, in small groups and/or within the classroom setting. This is an interagency effort between Redwood City School District and San Mateo County Human Services Agency.

Family Resource Centers: school-based centers which link families with their children's schools very early in the child's school career. A wide range of family needs can be met through the Family Resource Center, from information and referral to skill-building (e.g., how to conference with your child's teacher, how to help with homework) to providing food and clothing.

In order to sustain early intervention efforts, Family Focus supports and educates parents and siblings. This program strengthens the parent-child relationship, integrates the parents into the school program and builds stronger connections for families with both the school and the community at large. Accepting and building on the strengths of "parents-as-teachers" is key to implementing the Family Focus for School Success program. Additionally, classroom teachers are supported in their efforts to provide a successful school experience using conferences with Family Focus staff as well as staff development opportunities.

Because Family Focus is a research-based program, a comprehensive evaluation component has been established. Too often, schools have attempted to solve problems by layering program on top of program. The research and evaluation component is designed to provide policy-makers and practitioners with solid evidence that early intervention does make a significant and positive impact on school success for children at risk of failure.

Family Focus is funded entirely from private grant money (S. H. Cowell Foundation) and therefore is in constant jeopardy of being eliminated. Ideally, an early intervention program such as this should have a combination of funding sources which could include private, state and federal funding. The staff is preparing the Home Education Curriculum for national dissemination in the hopes it will generate some form of income.

PRESENTER

Jean Anthony is the Coordinator for Family Support Services in the Redwood City School District, and the administrator for Family Focus for School Success, Chapter 1 (Title 1) services, Healthy Start, Parent Literacy Program and the McKinney Homeless Funds programs.

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Selecting the Best Products for School and Home

Stevanne Auerbach
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INTRODUCTION

A review of the essential aspects about selecting and using the right toys. All children play and use a variety of products. Beginning with the infant's first mobile to older children's favorite playthings, the right products can stimulate, enhance and support developmental skills.

SUMMARY

Toys, games, and other products can provide a link between the child, parent, teacher and other children. Through the process of play children interact with others and learn to share, respond, develop clues and expand their emotional and social experiences. Children learn through their play experiences in a natural and evolving way.

Teachers can help parents find the right products to use with their children simply by providing good examples in children's classroom experiences. Parents can observe their children interacting with blocks, dolls, play equipment. They can observe the extent to which the child can interact well with others and when they may have a problem. Teachers can help parents to locate the right products and help their child be more comfortable.

Evaluate the Play Quotient of the toys, games and other products that are currently in your classroom or at home. Does the child have a balance, diversity, assortment of types of products? Look for a range of active, creative and educational products. Make sure the toys are in good condition.

Check that games, puzzles and other products have all the pieces. Be sure the child knows where the toys are stored and can return them to the easily accessible shelves. There should be a good mix of products that are age appropriate and have high play value to each child. Before shopping, observe the child at play. Gather a list of possible products from Dr. Toy's Holiday Guide, "100 Best Children's Products." Also ask for suggestions from sitters, grandparents, teacher and other parents. Notice advertisements, check your child's "Wish List" and current needs. As you examine a potential purchase ask yourself:

1. Is this toy (or product) appropriate now? Does the product fit the child's age, skills and abilities? Will it hold the child's interest?

2. Is the toy well-designed? Is it safe? Any potential hazards? Is the product too small, any sharp edges or loose ties? Is it non-toxic? Durable? Will it take rough treatment? Can it be easily cleaned? Does it meet Consumer Product Safety Standards? Is there a guarantee on the product?

3. Is the toy appealing? Is the product something the child will enjoy using for a long time? Does it have versatility?

4. Does the toy offer an opportunity to stimulate creativity? Can the child expand their imagination with the right product for art, crafts, hobbies, language, reading, music, movement and drama?

5. Does the toy match the package and the package match the toy? If the toy does not match ads or package it can be disappointing. Is age grading clear?

6. What will the toy teach? Does it help expand positive self-esteem, values, understanding, cultural awareness? Does it offer practice in skills, eye-hand coordination, fine and large motor skills? Communication? Does it offer learning about the environment, the community, the world? History? Computer? Other skills?

7. Can I afford this toy? Is the price affordable? Does the price match the value received?

8. Will the toy frustrate or challenge the child? Does the toy offer an opportunity to think, learn something new, practice, or try something that will be beneficial? Or will the product be too difficult for child to use without adult supervision?

9. Will the toy help to nurture childhood? Does the product help the child to express emotions, experience care and concern for others, practice positive social interaction? Provide value to his or her childhood? Or is there any violence, sexism or negative aspect to the product?

10. Is the toy fun? Most importantly, will the child enjoy using the product? Will it make him or her laugh? Have fun? Relax? Feel good?

PRESENTER

Stevanne Auerbach, PhD is also known as Dr. Toy. She is Director of the Institute for Childhood Resources in San Francisco. Dr. Auerbach is a child psychologist and author of The Toy Chest and Tips on Toys (audio tape). In 1986 she founded the San Francisco International Toy Museum, the first museum where children could play with new toys and see historic collections. She has just completed the third annual evaluation of "Dr. Toy's 100 Best Children's Product." The list is available free by sending a stamped, self- addressed #10 envelope to:

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We can't look at the school and the home in isolation from one another. Families and schools need to collaborate, to work together as partners in helping children achieve at high levels of learning.
- Dave Dawson

Partnership is the key word.
- Sue Ferguson

Take advantage of a centrally located, safe place where families can get together and talk with other families who have the same challenges and begin to build a sense of community; schools are wonderful places to do that.
- Angela Blackwell

Parents Are Lifesavers

Carol S. Batey
Metropolitan Nashville
Public Schools

INTRODUCTION

The "Parents Are Lifesavers In Their Children's Education" program is based on a parent's perception. This unique program is being implemented at Napier Elementary School and other schools in the Metro Nashville Public School System. Carol Batey, the developer of Parents Are Lifesavers, started as a parent volunteer and was then contracted by the (Napier Elementary) school director, Richard Benjamin, to work for the district .

SUMMARY

The information presented at this session was based on the book, "Creating a Climate for Parent Participation" (in progress). The material and suggestions covered are of value to any Parent Teacher Organization, educators and administrators. Emphasis is placed on parents' ability to function as "lifesavers," providing the administrator of the school sets the tone for their involvement.

First of all, it is most important not to undervalue any parent regardless of race, creed, exceptionality, social or economic status. Parents are more than willing to volunteer but there must be an outreach program for them. Parents should be encouraged to call for assistance in their district, school or community organization. Parents As Lifesavers provides parent and staff in-service training to help those seeking to understand how best to utilize parents' expertise.

Participants in this session were curious as to how Ms. Batey got her job working for the director of schools. Her response was that many parents who were once volunteers are now paid parent educators for their organization. Parents attending this workshop shared their different insights about what valuable partners parents can be. Batey emphasized how important it is to use parents for reaching other parents and strengthening the home/school partnership.

PRESENTER

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We know that students do better when schools have strong linkages with all of the families and the communities.
- Dave Dawson

The Family is the natural fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the state....Gender equity, women's equal participation in employment and shared parental responsibilities are essential elements of modern family policy. Families, as basic units of social life, are major agents of sustainable development at all the levels and their contribution to that process is critical for the success.

- Eugene Rolfe

The problems in Oakland are tough, but they are not beyond our reach if we work together. And this is a city that really demonstrates a commitment to working together.

- Angela Blackwell

Involving High-Risk Families in Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Prevention and Intervention Programs

Ann Bickel
Southwest Regional Laboratory

INTRODUCTION

The Western Regional Center for Drug-Free Schools and Communities is one of five regional technical assistance centers established by the U.S. Department of Education through the Drug- Free Schools and Communities Act of 1986. The mission of the Center is to prevent student alcohol and other drug use. One of our primary topics is helping schools and community-based agencies work more effectively to involve families in prevention and intervention processes.

Through lecture, group discussions and group activities, workshop participants learn how to conduct outreach and develop appropriate programs and services for families with alcohol, tobacco and other drug problems. Topics include: different needs of prevention and intervention programs, barriers to involvement, myths about family involvement, shifts in thinking about involvement, program models, outreach and retention and the process for intervention with families with problems.

The Western Center provides free assistance to schools, state education agencies, institutions of higher education and community-based agencies in California, Oregon, Washington, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Nevada, Alaska, Hawaii and the Pacific Islands. Workshops, technical assistance, resource materials for review and loan and co-sponsorship of conferences and meetings are the key services.

SUMMARY

Although there is little or no research available to demonstrate that traditional family involvement in education prevents the use of alcohol and other drugs by youth, family involvement increases student success, reduces the risk of student failure, helps families create positive learning environments and makes schools more effective. These are all related to protecting youth against alcohol and other drug use and other risk taking behaviors.

A second important reason for strengthening the relationship between families and schools is to insure that the messages students receive in the classroom about alcohol and other drug use are reinforced in the home. To create a consistent approach and a consensus concerning use, schools must involve families as partners.

A third important reason for involving families in education programs is to teach them how to intervene in the progression of an addicting disease, particularly alcoholism in young adults. According to Vernon Johnson, "Time and experience have taught us that a characteristic of the disease of chemical dependency is the progressive delusion of the alcoholic....We can break through that delusion with a process called intervention." When a young adult is in the process of addiction, the entire family system becomes progressively more dysfunctional. Schools and families can work together to intervene.

There are no formulas, no quick fixes and no easy answers to motivate people to take part in either prevention or intervention activities. If we offer a general interest prevention program on drugs, for example, it is likely that very few parents will attend because they have not made it a personal priority, they are not interested, they do not have the time and, most important, they do not have the pain. Programs are offered that target certain parents, usually parents experiencing problems with their kids. These parents may not participate because they fail to see the problem or they are frightened and feel helpless in dealing with it. There are lots of reasons why parents don't flock to programs, and these reasons are common to all districts.

Involving parents in various education and support programs through the auspices of the school is often communicated to the parent as parent "fixing," not parent participation. Parents hear that we are asking them to change, to adopt new behaviors and attitudes and to be "better parents" so that our job in the schools will be easier to do. People resist being fixed or changed because it is very threatening. No one likes to feel inadequate. Most parents are operating in the best way they can to meet their needs and the needs of their kids. People don't knowingly walk into situations that will cause them discomfort. Parents rarely take part in activities when someone else decides it is for their own good.

Prevention programs will be most effective when they are designed around the following characteristics:

- relevance: building programs around the needs of the participants

- incentive: encouraging participation through gifts and rewards
participant ownership: allowing participants to design and lead programs
- trust: creating a relationship and partnership with families
- creativity and fun: designing opportunities other than class room or parent education activities
- leverage: providing some uncomfortable choices often moves a family to action

The newer prevention programs look very different from traditional programs. They are not designed around parent education. They are designed to reach out to parents in personal and creative ways that meet the needs of the parents first and the school second.

Intervention programs are very different from prevention programs. They need to be developed with a good understanding of the role denial plays in families with problems. School-based family involvement programs will need to work with student assistance intervention teams to develop communication strategies to confront families. Then they need to be prepared to offer support and assistance in a number of ways.

Some workshop participants asked if intervention strategies should be included in school programs because they require so much time and training. Others asked if these interventions have good research data to demonstrate effectiveness. Most participants said that the discussions of the prevention strategies with the emphasis on meeting the needs of the families was useful for them in developing programs at their school sites.

PRESENTER

Ann Bickel is Senior Program Development Specialist with the Southwest Regional Laboratory; she provides workshops, resource development and technical assistance to schools throughout California and Nevada. Her key areas of interest and expertise are in family involvement strategies, intervention programs for at-risk youth and resiliency planning.

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Empowering Parents

Albert Black
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Texas Education Agency

INTRODUCTION

Texas is one of the three largest states, and is unique in its rainbow of inhabitants. Presently, a sector of the minority population is becoming the majority population. Many minorities have recently come from other countries and some live in the border towns. Therefore, educational leaders are forced to create strategies to empower minorities and all parents.

SUMMARY

Texas has accepted the challenge to strengthen family/school relationships. The Commissioner of the Texas Education Agency, Dr. Lionel "Skip" Meno, and Dr. Jay Cummings, Executive Deputy Commissioner for Education of Special Populations and Adults, recognized that a program or a component was needed to address parent and community involvement. The approach to reaching parents and community has been through public forums held on weekends, evenings and holidays. The Parent Involvement and Community Empowerment Initiative has established specific strategies to help eliminate barriers to parental involvement while at the same time increasing community understanding of the educational process. Implementation is through brochures, pamphlets, handouts and oral presentations (Public Parent and Community Forums).

Presently, Mr. Albert Black and Mrs. Claudia Phillips Joplin are responsible for this new initiative. The new initiative receives support service from an Administrative Secretary, Mrs. Myrtle Jackson. Several agencies are assisting with this endeavor. For example, the Texas P.T.A. is involved in co-writing a training manual for parents so that total empowerment can be achieved.

The Texas Initiative has four strands:

- *Parent Education*: training for parents through seminars, conferences, forums, workshops, handouts and media to describe the basic educational processes to insure that parents become vital advocates for quality instruction that improves student performance.

- *Parent Partnership*: enhancing the parents-as-partners participation in the decision- making process of the local schools; facilitating voluntary partnerships with parents, their employers, parent-teacher and community organizations and school personnel to advance the pursuit of excellence and equity for all students.
- *Parent Advisory Committee:* collaborating with task forces that assist in school governance so that pertinent ideas from local school districts are used to promote the adoption of a positive school climate to improve student performance.
- *Parent Conflict Resolution*: developing and presenting conflict resolution options to parents, families and school personnel to assure that the educational climate in the community is conducive to positive student learning.

Strategies and techniques include the following:

- development of regional open forums to discuss community concerns pertaining to the educational process in general and the De-partment of Education for Special Populations and Adults specifically;
- distribution of materials to be used with identified communities and school districts, including a parent's guide to student rights in departmental decisions and an explanation of the department's organizational structure as it relates to the educational process at local, state and federal levels;
- provision for family and community support training modules to be used in targeted districts to increase responsiveness and communication;
- implementation of an annual parent, school and community conference which highlights program innovations, guideline changes or updates and successful family and community support service prgrams; and
- communication to families in need of greater access to the public schools through telephone consultations, correspondence and on-site training.

PRESENTERS

Albert Black serves as Special Assistant to the Executive Deputy Commissioner for Parent and Community Involvement in the Texas Education Agency and has been with the agency for 20 years. He has held many leadership roles in the community as well as in the field of education. He has been a principal and a teacher.

Claudia Joplin is the Program Director for State and Federal Parent/ Community Laws in the Texas Education Agency. She has been an adjunct English professor at a 4-year institution, a professional school counselor, a classroom teacher, an administrator and a manager in the business world.

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Empowering people means giving them a real voice in what we do, and that means that all of us have to have the courage to take risks, to step out and encourage others to do something that they haven't done before. This means that professional associations have to be prepared to recognize that some of what we call our credentialist view of professions may be threatened. And people who challenge our expertise have to be listened to. And, somehow, out of this we have to develop a partnership. It will be tough, but we have to do it.
- Eugene Rolfe

We never forget that this is a country that's been based on a lot of wrong, as well as a lot of good things. And we had and we still have racial barriers.
- Angela Blackwell

Parental Endorsement and Support: How to Gain and Maintain Mutually Supportive Family-School Relationships

Anne Bouie
Center for the Development of Schools and Communities

INTRODUCTION

The workshop addressed the critical issue of building mutually supportive relationships between schools and families, with a particular emphasis on these dynamics in urban communities or in any school setting where the staff racial, ethnic and/or social class composition is significantly different from that of the students and families served by the school. While the principles discussed are applicable for most school settings, they are particularly relevant in these kinds of settings.

The session focused on the attitudes, behaviors, policies and practices that schools can impact and change which affect the quality of school-family relations. There are many variables schools cannot change; there are, however, many they can.

SUMMARY

The first important variable is the conceptual framework or paradigm used in defining poor families and families of color. Traditionally, the prevailing approach has been focused on actual or alleged dysfunctions and deficiencies. This approach often leads to a skewed view of poor parents and parents of color. They are often presumed not to care about their children's education and not to have prepared them for the formal educative process. This framework is most clearly articulated in the work of such researchers and policy makers as Daniel Moynihan, Allison David, Robert Hess and Frank Reismann.

In contrast, the resiliency framework focuses on the strengths of poor children and their families. This framework looks at adaptation, coping mechanisms and the positive characteristics of poor families, the extended families of which they are a part, and the communities in which they live. This framework sees poor parents and families as partners and equals in the work of educating children. It understands the school's alienation from the community and the need to secure the community's

trust as an ally, and not simply as another bureaucratic entity.
It is important to examine the relationship between schools and communities as a process with three overlapping phases. The first phase is acknowledging the alienation of the school from the immediate community, and the policies, practices, behaviors, attitudes and competencies that school staff can employ to overcome the alienation and win the endorsement of the school and the families it serves. The second sphere of activity is involvement, the most fruitful area in regard to student achievement. This is where the parent actively assumes the role of teacher at home, reinforcing and supporting the education the child gets at school. All learning cannot and does not occur at school. Much of the reinforcement for school, and the actual work, must be done at home. Finally, participation speaks to the active presence of parents on site at the school.

The workshop addresses the research base and how to translate research findings into policy and practice at the school site. Its premise is that when schools earn the endorsement of parents, and when parents see themselves as allies with the school and view the school as another strand in their support network, teachers will have more time to plan and teach, disciplinary problems will be significantly reduced and student achievement will improve. ❦

References

For those interested in more information, the presenter recommends the work of Jacqueline Jordan Irvine, Bonnie Bernard, Etta Hollins and Sarah Lightfoot.

PRESENTER

Ann Bouie is available to implement training sessions on how to translate research into sound policy and practice.

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The Role of Communities in Promoting Children's Rights: The Case of Brazil

Caius Brandao
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INTRODUCTION

Brazil is an extremely rich country with 3.3 million square miles, recognized worldwide for its huge agricultural and industrial production. Over 150 million Brazilians live in an area larger than Europe or the continental US, making this country the 10th largest economy in the world. In 1994, Brazil's Foreign Reserve reached US $40 billion, larger than Italy's or Britain's. Nevertheless, 32 million Brazilian children live in absolute poverty. Their families have a monthly income of less than US $35 and lack access to food, health care, education, safe water, adequate sanitation and proper employment. The presentation described the plight of Brazilian children and the activities of the children's rights organizations fighting to improve these children's lives.

SUMMARY

Over the past 20 years, Brazil's cities have absorbed over 29 million rural migrants expelled from their land by intensive capitalization of Brazilian agriculture, development projects for mining, hydroelectric power and cattle raising and other displacing economic activities. This population overflow has bred an unskilled social underclass whose families disintegrate in the face of utmost social neglect. Unable to provide for their families, parents leave children to fend for themselves in the streets of large cities where petty crimes, prostitution and unhealthy jobs are the means of survival. For the past 10 years, the children of the poor have been heavily targeted by paramilitary groups as a result of this process. Every day at least four children are murdered in Brazil. According to Amnesty International, over 90% of these killings go unpunished.

The plight of Brazilian street children has increasingly disclosed the nation's unbalanced distribution of wealth (one of the worst in the world) posing a symbolic dimension to the rather concrete struggle for social justice in that country. The fall of the military regime in the 1980's gave more confidence to social movements striving for the re-democratization of the economy and state institutions. In 1985, a coalition of more than 200 organizations from every region in Brazil formed the National

Movement of Street Children (MNMMR). For the first time in Brazil's history, the issue of children's rights became part of the national political agenda: the church, neighborhood associations, unions, political parties, the media, corporate groups, schools, daycare centers and non-profit organizations engaged in a nation-wide campaign to lobby the National Congress for the inclusion of the following article in the new constitution:

> "It is the duty of the family, society and the State to ensure children and adolescents, with absolute priority, the right to life, health, food, education, leisure, professional training, culture, dignity, respect, freedom and family and community life, in addition to safeguarding them against all forms of negligence, discrimination, exploitation, violence, cruelty and oppression." (Article 227 of the Brazilian Constitution of October 1988.)

According to UNICEF, this article "introduced the principles of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, one year before the Convention was actually adopted by the United Nations General Assembly." Thereafter, Brazil became a signatory of, and one of the first countries to ratify, the Convention.

In addition to vociferously denouncing the violence against street children, the MNMMR has been able to identify, improve and replicate alternative approaches to traditional government programs, challenging the wholesale institutionalization of disadvantaged children. These new tendencies were based on a progressive vision that every child should be able to actively participate in decision making processes which affect their lives. In coalition with other national and international NGOs, the church and government agencies for children's welfare, the MNMMR hosted national meetings for the exchange of experiences being developed at the grassroots level. The ground for a massive campaign on behalf of Brazilian youth became solid and a new goal was defined: the creation of legal instruments to raise the issue of children's rights as a national priority. During this process, new studies were published by the MNMMR to denounce the increase of death-squad activities targeting the children of the poor.

After intensive lobbying articulated by the children's rights movement, the National Congress ratified the Children and Adolescents' Act (ECA), which was signed into law by the President in 1990. According to Americas Watch, "Brazil enjoys some of the most progressive legislation on children's rights in the world....A wide-ranging and comprehensive piece of legislation, the ECA provides for all the civil, social and economic rights of children, and is based on the concept of 'integral protection'." The ECA provides the tools for its own implementation by mandating the creation of federal, state and municipal councils. These 'Children's Rights Councils' enforce the Act at the policymaking and judicial level, whereas municipal guardianship councils are to be set up to monitor the enactment of the law through policies of government and non-government programs. These councils are made up of an equal number of NGOs' representatives and government officials to ensure public accountability.

The Brazil Project of the International Child Resource Institute, headquartered in Berkeley, California, seeks to inspire, organize and direct international support to contribute effectively to Brazilian efforts to provide impoverished Brazilian children with protection, care and opportunities. While the Brazil Project's ultimate goal is the welfare of Brazilian children, it has focused its efforts on reducing the number of assaults and murders of urban minors by increasing the serious prosecution of perpetrators; on improving the quality of services provided for children, particularly in the areas of early childhood education and nutrition; and on increasing the direct involvement of street children and their allies in the ongoing formation and implementation of public policies benefiting underprivileged children and youth.

The Brazil Project has introduced an alternative approach to the so-called "top-down" type of assistance from Northern to Southern countries. By implementing close partnerships with Brazilian grassroots non-governmental organizations, the Brazil Project acknowledges and supports the crucial work undertaken by the Brazilian people to promote and defend the rights of their children.

PRESENTER

Caius Brandao, Director of ICRI's Brazil Project, is graduated in Social Phenomenology by the Philadelphia Association, England. For several years Mr. Brandao has been working as an advocate for human and children's rights as well as environmental issues with non-governmental organizations in the United States, Europe and Brazil. Mr. Brandao belongs to an active network of Brazilian and non-Brazilian volunteers working for social justice in Brazil through the Bay Area-based Brazil Action Solidarity Exchange (BASE).

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Multiculturalism and learning to live in a multicultural society is a uniquely challenging prospect forall of us.
- Eugene Rolfe

Equity demands that we find our best selves. Equity demands that we celebrate the progress that we're making at the same time that we never let up in terms of where it is we have to go.
- Angela Blackwell

Preparation of Chinese Immigrants for Effective Parenting in the United States

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INTRODUCTION

Immigration has been an on-going process in the United States, and immigrants have invariably been faced with a confusing array of values and behavior patterns which are difficult to understand or contrary to the ones they bring. In the process of trying to survive, many do not know about the responsibilities of American citizenship. But even more painful and complicated is the process of child rearing in a society different from the immigrant's place of origin. Estrangement often occurs in families which have no access to gaining some cultural perspective nc skills to solve their problems.

Immigrant children quite rapidly learn and embrace many aspects of American culture while attending school. Teachers and children are often puzzled by objections and resistances which immigrant parents present. It is essential for immigrant families and school personnel to be knowledgeable about each culture in order to form a successful partnership in educating our young.

SUMMARY

Every society has its own unique way of defining two extremely important questions: 1) What is the purpose of life? 2) What is my identity? The answers to these questions guide values and behaviors.

What is the purpose of life?
(American viewpoint:) Broadly speaking our society fosters its people to fully develop their capabilities and fulfill their visions for themselves. This is assumed as an innate part of life in a democratic country in which each person is valued as intrinsically worthy. To a great extent then, people may live for themselves, for their nuclear families, and for their country.
(Chinese viewpoint:) Based upon an ancient agrarian economy and the philosophy of Confucius, the purpose of life is not individual

fulfillment but clan well-being and prosperity. Centuries of economic uncertainty have re-enforced the necessity for all family members to pool their efforts for the good of the extended family and to work toward higher social status (therefore economic security) through academic achievement. Additionally, patriotism, preservation of the Chinese language and cultivation of a moral character are regarded as important.

Probably deep within the human heart is a strong urge for personal fulfillment. Therefore children of immigrants quickly adopt this value. However, their parents perceive this as selfishness and seriously question American values. Parents may refuse permission for their to children to participate in some school sponsored activities which they may perceive as frivolous or undermining to clan values.

Teachers may interpret the parents' refusals as too authoritarian and/or narrow minded. For instance, parents may regard participation as a musician in school performances as not "academic" and not leading to college acceptance. Or class overnight camping trips may be regarded as "only for fun," i.e., having no academic value; field trips may also cause parents to worry about danger and possible loss of a clan member.

Who am I? What is my identity?
(American viewpoint:) A person's selfhood is based upon the summation of his/her talents, beliefs, appearance, intellect, physical endowments, accomplishments, relationships, self-regard, group connections, etc. Children have human rights and should be respected as people of worth and potential. They are nurtured to be expressive, creative, inventive, independent, self reliant and responsible. They are encouraged to discover their talents and to develop to their fullest potential.
(Chinese viewpoint:) Identity is based upon clan membership and ancestral village of origin. The larger the extended family and the more the individual is surrounded by clan members, the better is the sense of self-hood and well-being. As a person fulfills duties to the clan such as providing financial support to extended family members here in the U.S. or in China, the more is his/her sense of self-hood confirmed.

Each cultural pattern of defining identity includes some elements of the other, but there is a great difference in emphasis. With each one there are rewards as well as prices to pay. For instance, the Chinese person might have a lot of group support but may be subject to unreasonable demands or may have to give up personal goals to conform to the needs of the family group. The American may function independently, but might lack the help and/or support of an extended family which might, for instance, pool finances, time and labor toward running a business or help in taking care of little children.

Child rearing methods

(American:) Child centered; children have rights, are guided toward appropriate behavior and decisions, are taught to take responsibility for their own actions, are given positive reinforcement, and are taught to learn through understanding and critical thinking.
(Chinese:) Adult centered; more authoritative; the child's role is to obey and be filial to family adults. Studiousness is emphasized. Learning is by rote. Negative reinforcement is administered; approval and love are indirectly expressed.

Within the context of positive reinforcement in American society, children of immigrant parents often mistake their parents' child rearing as lacking in affection and resent being subjected to authoritarian methods. They may even respect their teachers more and scorn their parents for being uninformed about American life.

Family School Relationships

Education, schools and teachers are highly revered by the Chinese. However, several factors may interfere with a close partnership:

- parents find it hard to bridge the great distance when children are bussed out of the neighborhood for integration purposes; families may have an inability to communicate in English; there may be a lack of bilingual and bi-literate personnel in the school, therefore parents/families may not know what is being said in school;
- family members often work long hours at low pay, and cannot get away from work easily;
- Chinese families share an intrinsic belief that teachers have total power to teach their children academically as well as to train them to be of good character. Education is regarded as encompassing both and cannot be separated;
- A common practice in China is for the teacher to call upon the family when s/he has a complaint about the child. An active parent-teacher partnership in educating the child is not part of everyday life.

Recommendations to address these challenging factors:

- Workshops for teachers to help them fully understand the foregoing material. Also assistance in planning for parent-teacher meetings.
- Parent workshops at school:

  If the teacher is able to speak Chinese, s/he should personally telephone parents and invite them to attend. This is because the parent will respond best to the teacher whom s/he knows is directly dealing with his/her child daily. If the teacher cannot speak Chinese, get an assistant who can. However, the assistant will need to be trained on the best approach in issuing the invitation as well as on how to deal with resistances and/or vagueness about attending.

  The first workshop should be conducted in Chinese with an empathetic approach, covering the foregoing discussion regarding differences in defining identity, purpose of life and child rearing methods. Take time to let parents vent their frustrations regarding these contrasts, as well as some of their daily problems.

  The second workshop should provide information on the American educational system, opportunities for the children as well as for adults, and emphasize the importance of responsible citizenry in our democracy with specific descriptions of our government and the right and responsibility to study the issues and vote.

  The third workshop should explain taxation and the how the money is used and present various tasks which parents/families can perform as member(s) of the school community. This might include serving as: room parent, yard monitor, tutor for specific children, lunch room assistant; or it might involve listening to children read, telephoning other parents to invite them to become involved, sharing unique cultural experiences, etc. Ask parents to specify which task they are willing to provide the school.

PRESENTER

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High School, Family and Community Partnerships

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INTRODUCTION

In September of 1991, researchers at the Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning joined with educators at six high schools in Maryland to explore the questions, "What types of family involvement practices are occurring in high schools? What types of practices do teachers, families and students want to happen at their high schools? Can new, improved and appropriate practices for high school students and families be successfully implemented? and with what effects?" Connors' presentation focused on the answers to these questions.

SUMMARY

Students, teachers and parents were surveyed at the start of the project in order to have a solid understanding of the needs and desires for family involvement in each school. A brief review of the general survey results follows:

Most students (82%) agreed that even in high school their parents needed to be involved in their education. Most parents (80%) reported that they wanted to be more involved than they currently were, and many students (50%) wanted their parents to be more involved. But just 32% of the teachers felt it was their responsibility to involve families.

Almost half of the students reported that "On most days, I do not have enough time to talk to my parents about school or homework," and about one quarter of the parents also reported that on most days they "do not have enough time to talk with my ninth grader about school."

Some parents (25%) reported that the high school contacted them at least once about fund raising or volunteering; 40% were never called by the school, and 50% were never contacted to schedule a formal conference with a teacher. Students said their parents rarely or never went to the school for conferences (53%), meetings (62%), or to volunteer (78%). Teachers contacted about 77% of families with letters; 52% of families with phone calls; and 38% of families in conferences.

The top four practices that teachers think are important for parents are: check student homework, talk to teen about school at home, tell teen that school is important, and help teen to balance school and other responsibilities. Parents say they do many of these same practices: for example, 85% talk to teen about homework, 94% talk to teen about school, 88% tell teen that school is important, and 88% help teen plan time for homework, chores and other responsibilities. Parents reported that they need additional information from the school to help their teen more effectively. Topics chosen by over 60% of the parents were: planning for the future, improving grades, developing teen talents, peer pressure, stress, homework and taking tests.

In all of the high schools, parents (72%), students (61%) and teachers (95%) believed that the school should start or improve practices to help parents understand more about adolescent development. Many teachers (87%), parents (60%) and students (54%) felt that their schools should develop practices to include students in parent-teacher conferences. Students suggested that communication practices be designed to reach more families, be more positive and look ahead.

Students reported it would be okay with them if their teacher asked them to: show my parent something I learned or did well (88%), ask my parent for some ideas for a story or project (81%), talk with my parent about current events (79%), work with my parent to improve or keep up my grades (79%), ask my parent to listen to me read something I wrote (77%), ask my parent to help me study or practice for a test (77%) and bring home notes, notices or newsletters from class (76%).

The surveys of teachers, parents and students were designed to elicit information to help schools understand some of the pertinent concerns and questions about involvement at the high school level. Although previous work with elementary and middle grades can guide our efforts and alert us to potential challenges, the needs of high school students, parents and teachers are unique in many ways. Programs of school-family-community partnerships in high schools need to consider:

- the changing needs of adolescents, such as the need for greater autonomy and responsibility, and the need to develop individual skills and talents;

- the changing needs of families, such as more working parents, living greater distances from high schools and the need to learn about a more complex school organization; and
- the changing needs of high school teachers, such as having greater numbers of students to teach, more specialized training and more families to involve.

Important questions emerge at the high school level about how these issues affect the types of practices utilized to involve families and methods of implementation.

Even if your school is unable to conduct surveys of teachers, parents and students, you do not have to wait to get started. Our survey results identified many consistent patterns and themes across the urban, rural and suburban high schools in this project. Your high school can join the national agenda to improve partnerships with families by following these steps:

- Create an action team for school and family partnerships; charge this team with making the time, getting the training and identifying and implementing the practices most needed at your school.
- Secure funds to support the development of your program of partnership. Your action team for school-family-community partnerships will be more effective if it is supported by at least a small stipend (our schools receive $500 per semester for three to five years) for time needed to plan, implement and revise new or improved practices.
- Select practices to start to improve the school's connections with all families and with the community. The following chart identifies some basic practices that emerged from discussions with the project high schools about their survey data.

Type 1 *Parenting*	Develop a lasting set of workshops on key issues in adolescent development. This could be a videotaped series developed with the help of a local cable company, community or technical college, or the high school's media department. The guidance office could take leadership for these activities, working with the action team, perhaps using the tapes as a forum for a parent workshop series. The tapes can be made available to families through the school, the library, or for free at local video stores on a check- out basis.

Type 2 *Communication*	Include students in parent-teacher conferences. Develop one-page guidelines for parents and teens to prepare for the conference. The guidelines would help parents and teens identify common concerns, interests and talents to discuss with teachers during the conference. The conference could also focus on students' goals and how the teacher and parent could better assist the student.
Type 3 *Volunteering*	One member of the action team (or a parent and teacher as co-chairs) could coordinate parent and community volunteers with school and teacher needs for help. Encourage many to participate by allowing work to be done at home or at school, on the weekends or before/after regular school hours. Encourage teachers to be creative in their requests for assistance so that the many skills and interests of parents and community members can be tapped.
Type 4 *Learning at Home*	Design interactive homework that requires students to talk to someone at home about something interesting that they are learning in class or about important school decisions. The homework activity is the student's responsibility but a parent or other family or community member is used as a reference source or audience for the student. This enables students to share ideas at the same time that families are informed about the students' curricula and learning activities.
Type 5 *Decision Making*	Invite parents and students to become members of school committees or councils to review curriculum or specific school policies. In order to encourage diverse representation, ask a more experienced parent or student leader to be a "buddy" to a less experienced parent or student.
Type 6 *Collaborating with Community*	Develop a community resource directory, perhaps in cooperation with the school nurse or with a member of the Chamber of Commerce or other group, which gives parents and students information on community agencies that can help with health issues, job training and summer or part- time employment for teens, and other areas of need for families and students.

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> *That's the role of community: to hold the school accountable; to demand equitable outcomes; to put the burden on the schools to educate all of the children and not to ever let up until they're doing that.*
> *- Angela Blackwell*

> *Family involvement has been something that has really been critical in my life since I had polio when I was a year and a half and it was really because of the involvement of my parents that I'm here today.*
> *- Judith Heumann*

Family-School Relationships: Some Insights from the Field of Conflict Resolution

Freya D. De Cola
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INTRODUCTION

Freya De Cola organized an independent reading course which focused on research analyzing the relationship between (1) parents and school staff and (2) the world of the family and the institutional environment of the school. This workshop examined elements of conflict in these relationships, conflict often not overtly expressed, but strongly coloring patterns of interaction between families and school staff.

SUMMARY

Successful parent involvement programs must take into account differences in perception and in the roles parents and school staff play in the life of the child. These two groups also differ in their organizational structure and decision-making power. The building of the necessary rapport between parents and school staff requires an approach that reflects these realities.

Concepts and techniques from the field of conflict resolution can help in understanding parent- school relationships and in suggesting options for improving interactions. These include structures and processes that allow parents, students, school staff and any other affected parties to have a voice, encourage reflective listening and foster collaborative problem-solving. These structures and processes are flexible and can be tailored to fit the realities of a particular school or community. An example of a program that has successfully incorporated several basic conflict resolution concepts is that of the Comer schools.

In order for family-school partnerships to be successful, they must be based on a realistic picture of the relationship, its strengths and its limitations. An accurate analysis and understanding of this crucial dynamic is necessary to overcome the frustration school staff feel when parents are not involved and the anger parents often feel at the way they and their children are treated by the school. The power of different frames of reference and the role they play in creating conflict become apparent.

Building on an analysis of the relationship, conflict resolution techniques can help parents, students and schools create mechanisms for collaboration and deal with disagreements when they arise. They can help schools foster a positive climate to eliminate the conditions that cause certain types of conflicts. When people feel acknowledged and understood they will respond with a positive attitude and a willingness to become involved.

References

A copy of the presenter's research paper can be requested and will be available as an ERIC document. The single best book on the topic is Sara Lawrence Lightfoot's Worlds Apart: Relationships Between Families and Schools (1978). Also of interest is the research of John U. Ogbu on immigrant and involuntary minorities and their different attitudes towards educational achievement. James P. Comer's book School Power (1980) describes the New Haven project which incorporates a number of conflict resolution principles. The Family-School Collaboration Project in New York is another good example of an approach using conflict resolution techniques.

PRESENTER

Freya DeCola is currently involved in family-school issues in several ways. Besides being the mother of a 9th grader, she is finishing an MS degree in the Institute of Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University, where she has made this topic a primary focus. She also works as a Parent Liaison at Langston Hughes Middle School in Reston, VA. She chairs the Human Relations Advisory Committee to the Fairfax County School Board, where they are discussing community-school partnership efforts for violence prevention.

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Making Parents Part of the School Team: A Bootstrap Operation

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INTRODUCTION

Winton Intermediate School is located in Hayward, California, a suburb of the San Francisco Bay Area. It serves approximately 550 seventh and eighth graders who come from diverse ethnic backgrounds including 40% of Hispanic background. There is a high transiency rate and a high level of single parent and AFDC families. Winton's parent involvement program began in the middle of a school district financial crisis and has blossomed into a solid, multifaceted program. Now in its third year of development, teachers, administration and parents have experienced a genuine change of attitude regarding the role of parents in this school's purpose and functioning. Along with this change of attitude, there has been a change in student achievement, parent presence at the school site, and mutual support of each other's roles in the educational process.

SUMMARY

In this project Winton has used principles of action research, organizational development and quality improvement concepts. Key components in the project include a study skills program for parent teacher interaction with students based on video presentations and close monitoring; a "Parent Volunteer Resource Bank" that now includes close to 120 parents; an approach to home- school communication that is "multi-channel/multi-event" focused; a highly involved Spanish bilingual community group; several community based resources for parents on campus.

We have found several things of importance. First, once we began to trust parents and work in ways that were mutually beneficial, growth took place; second, we found that when action leads to results, it encourages further action in new areas. Both parents and school staff are able to move beyond seeing parents as "necessary burdens and unwanted guests" to "necessary resources and wanted partners."

We found value in basing our plans on a good framework of action (e.g., Epstein's six major goals). Crucial to our success, along with the plan, was being able to proceed quickly into action, "to get something going." From that point we watched closely what was happening and made key adjustments. To make things understandable and coherent, we talked about what we were doing quite a bit including publicizing it to others.

One recommendation is to start with key early questions: what are the major needs of the school and its parents? what action has a good chance of success? where do we find good basic ideas? who can do it (coordinate)? should we consider a team approach? what are the specific first steps? what are the expected roadblocks? When can we start? how much time is needed? how much will it cost (in terms of money, people time, other resources)?

PRESENTERS

Richard Elliott is a psychological consultant to schools and businesses in the Bay Area and has recently worked with the Winton Intermediate Team to set up a multifaceted parent involvement program.

Chet Lloyd has 24 years of experience in education (as teacher, dean, and vice-principal). He is currently the principal of Winton Intermediate School and leads the Parent Involvement Team.

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> *One of the critical issues we need to be thinking about is who we were when we were younger, what role our parents played and what kinds of frustrations did we hear our parents talking about when they were trying to get involved in our education.*
> *- Judith Heumann*

Family Involvement Training Continuum: Moving Beyond Awareness

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INTRODUCTION

On January 1, 1991, a law went into effect in California which requires school personnel to actively involve families in the education of their children in a variety of ways, including teaching parents strategies to teach their children at home. More recent legislation requires teacher preparation programs to provide students with instruction that will assist them in assuming new roles with regard to families.

Since 1985 the community-based Parent Power Project, recipient of the Christa McAuliffe Showcase of Excellence Award for "innovative curricula," has been providing such preparation. It was started in response to two needs: (1) the need to train graduate students in education and related fields to work sensitively and effectively with families, particularly those whose children have learning difficulties, and (2) the need to serve families contacting the university seeking help for their children.

SUMMARY

Students from a variety of backgrounds are recruited for a three-unit graduate course (which can be used to complete several credentials and professional licenses). The first weeks of the semester are spent discussing common family issues and concerns, as well as major activities of the project. After students are matched with a family, they gather information using family background and teacher interview forms; obtain and review school records with the family; do diagnostic teaching; demonstrate successful strategies and materials while gradually turning over the tutoring to family members; write weekly progress reports to the classroom teacher and a final summary; lead weekly parent discussion and student self-esteem groups; and help parents compile a resource notebook.

The families leave the project the twelfth week of the semester, and the focus of the remaining weeks is on the creation of parent involvement activities and projects. Students complete school site surveys and are asked to design a "realistic family involvement program" for their particular (or projected) job situation. Numerous spin-off projects, started by former students, are currently in operation. For example, Parent Pride in Education, now in its seventh year, has translators for five languages at its sessions. In addition, many students (10 in one year alone) have completed a Master's thesis or project on some aspect of parent involvement. These have then been used as a foundation for a program serving families. Former students are now entering doctoral programs, and some are concentrating on family involvement as their area of research interest.

Since its inception, the Project has provided direct services to approximately 750 children and adults drawn from a wide variety of economic, educational, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Evaluation forms completed by parents, classroom teachers and Parent Power teachers consistently report improved grades and classroom behavior, as well as eased tensions at home.

The past two decades have witnessed a major rethinking of the role families in their children's education. One of the most critical contributing factors has been the rapidly growing body of research revealing a strong, positive correlation between family involvement in their children's education and improvements in academic achievement, attendance, grades and student attitudes and behaviors. Yet, change in terms of everyday school practice has been frustratingly slow; this is a major reason laws are now being passed to try to accelerate the process.

Unfortunately, laws sometimes highlight a problem and mandate solutions, but fail to provide the means to proceed. But it is within our professional means to offer relevant, field-based, family involvement coursework for pre- and in-service teachers. Furthermore, no one is in a better position than faculty in Schools of Education to bring about the needed and desired changes. Ten years of experience at the Parent Power Project confirms that university students and parents can work together effectively to support children, and students, having had this experience, will often continue to involve families in their future professional work. As one student put it: "I think I had a very negative idea about parents. I really didn't want them in my way. I just got done having professors critique me, and now I'm going to have parents coming into my room and checking up on me! This class has helped me see parents as wonderful resources and made me feel a lot more confident."

My understanding of what is needed to prepare teachers to work supportively with families continues to evolve. I have come to realize that just as parents come to the Project at different points in the learning process so, too, do students. I have been working on a "Continuum of Family Involvement Training" that I am finding useful to my own work. Briefly, it describes four stages and the kinds of information and activities needed by students at that stage:

- *Awareness:* personal and societal attitudes concerning family involvement in the education of their children, as well as attitudes toward families who are racially, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse.
- *Information*: home-school communication strategies, legal rights of parents, community resources.
- *Experience*: direct work with families and schools to practice conferencing and group facilitation skills, and to teach parents how to support their children's learning.
- *Contribution to the field*: research, professional speaking and writing, initiation of family involvement activities.

I realize now that, not knowing any better ten years ago, I plunged my students headlong into the Experience stage of a clinical project. Because of their personal and professional strengths, they were successful, and I have had the pleasure of working with them as they have moved into the Contribution stage. However, during the Fall, 1994 semester, I developed a different model for a new bilingual special education intern class which was too big for a clinical setting. Most of the students were in their first teaching position and, in addition, taking three other courses concurrently. So this course focused much more on the beginning stages of the continuum, and activities were kept simple and realistic for new teachers. For example, all students were asked to develop welcoming letters, written homework policies, and make home visits. Even so, some students were ready and willing to move to the higher stages, and completed needs assessment surveys and began to hold parent meetings.

My overall recommendations to teachers and to teacher educators are simple. There is no one right way to involve families or to train teachers to work with them. You will make some mistakes. (A "pure heart" invites forgiveness.) You do not have to know it all—no one does. People will tell you, "It won't work." Do it anyway. Do it because making a difference in someone's life is one of the reasons many of us became educators, and involving families in the education of their children is one of the most potent ways to make a difference.

PRESENTER

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> *We need to think hard about how schools can stay focused on education, really partner with communities, opening up their physical assets, like the school building, opening up their minds to new ways of working, opening up their time to be able to work with others and help to learn and teach about the different cultures and how can they work together.*
>
> *- Angela Blackwell*

> *When we talk about family involvement we neglect to understand the fact that parents are the backbone of family involvement. One of the critical issues we need to deal with in institutions of higher education and public and private school settings is why we've shut the doors to allowing parents to provide the kind of input they should be providing.*
>
> *- Judith Heumann*

Parents as Teachers and Learners: The Charquin Experience

Gloria Wilber Fearn
Ohlone Press

INTRODUCTION

In 1973 Charquin opened as a K-2 multi-age-grouped (open classroom) alternative school within Laurel Elementary, a public school in Hayward, California. The open classroom philosophy was holistic, democratic and nonauthoritarian in concept. The parent participation format was borrowed from the parent co-op nursery school model. As an alternative school Charquin was a public school of choice. Families understood that active participation was expected. The program appealed to the counter culture movement of the time, and also to some middle class parents who were put off by the "Back to Basics" movement of the 1970s.

SUMMARY

Charquin has evolved over time. In 1981, when I enrolled my child in Charquin, the program served 30 students, K-3, and had one teacher with two rooms. The classrooms were set up with learning centers for math, art, language arts, cooking, gardening, reading, quilting, etc. Most Charquin families provided a parent or other adult who spent one day a week staffing a center and presenting an activity they had planned. Students moved fairly freely from one center to another. Attendance at most centers was optional. Reading, math and language were required. Families who couldn't participate in the classroom helped out in other ways, such as fund-raising, cleaning, carpentry, car pooling, typing and editing.

When I left Charquin in 1988 the program had expanded to serve over 90 students. It had three teachers and four classrooms, and occupied an entire wing of Markham Elementary School. The instructional approach had changed from individualization to cooperation. Cooperative learning groups had cut into time allocated to learning centers. Charquin had practiced an affirmative action entrance policy for several years and its racial/ethnic balance was similar to that of Hayward Unified School District. Charquin continues to have fewer single parent families than do most district classrooms.

At Charquin the distinction between "parent involvement," the term which is currently in vogue, and "parent participation," is important. Participation implies a degree of ownership and responsibility which involvement does not. Charquin parents believe that they built and are responsible for the program. They act out this responsibility not only in the classroom, but also in the Parent Group where policy decisions are made. Parent ownership sets the stage for an extremely rich and energized classroom where parents and children together do an amazing variety of classroom activities and take many field trips.

Unfortunately, parent ownership also sets the stage for conflict with the administration, the teachers' union and new faculty, who usually come unprepared to share power with parents. Program expansion and new instructional methods challenge Charquin's hands-on, learning-while-doing approach to parent education. Parents are encouraged to take risks, mistakes are honored, and time is built in for reflection and evaluation.

Charquin illustrates the role that parents can play in developing, delivering and supporting a rich and diverse educational program which addresses the needs of the whole child. Charquin is not a model of efficiency: it's a model of community where participation builds in systems of redundancy which support the child and his/her whole family. The challenge that Charquin presents is that of finding ways of making such schools available to all children and their parents.

The Charquin experience suggests that if parents are to act as effective participants in a school setting, the value of their participation must be acknowledged, and encouraging participation must be a priority. Supportive structures are necessary. Granting parents access to school buses and school lunch programs are sometimes important. Assisting parents in making connections with each other, sharing telephone numbers, car pools, babysitting arrangements and instructional resources is essential.

Parent participation should be recognized as a dynamic learning process involving parent, child, teacher and other community members. Teachers need to understand that parents aren't there just to help out. They're really there to learn. Parents learn in the same way that everyone else learns. They try things. They make mistakes. They reflect on what happened. They try again. Teacher time for reflection and planning with parents is essential.

New teaching strategies have implications for teachers and parents alike. If parents are to function as facilitators of learning in a classroom structured to encourage cooperative problem- solving, they need to be trained for the role in the same way that teachers are trained. Parents should be included in teacher inservice training. Workshops should be provided for parents, and parents should be encouraged to mentor each other.

Parents usually enter the program very tentatively. Before long they find the points of tension, make suggestions for improving things, and bump into resistance. Attention to issues of power, authority and process are crucial. This is probably the most neglected issue in teacher education.

The most active questioner in my session was a teacher from a restructuring school who wanted suggestions for getting parents of older children (fourth-sixth grade) involved, and for ways to structure a program to support their involvement. Even at Charquin parents start to draw back from classroom participation after the fourth grade. Those parents who remain active teachers often have a special skill or interesting personality that older children find particularly attractive. Other parents tend to move out of the classroom, becoming field trip drivers and organizers of special projects. Charquin starts participation in kindergarten and has much more parent participation in the classroom than most schools. Parents who start early often grow with their children and learn the skills that keep them involved over the long run. Offering a variety of ways that parents can be involved is very important. Parents want to help and will do those things that are comfortable. Scheduling is important.

PRESENTER

Gloria Wilber Fearn is the author of Building the Good School: Participating Parents at Charquin. She is a former elementary school, Head Start and State Preschool teacher who now teaches courses on parent participation in the schools through California State University Extension and University of California Extension. Gloria was a participating parent in the Charquin Program from 1981 until 1988.

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Parental Rights in Germany

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INTRODUCTION

The lecture given to the audience contained two parts:

- a description of the legal situation on parental rights in German schools, and
- some ideas about the practical problems of cooperation between parents and schools in Germany, especially under the aspect of a multicultural society and different expectations of parents.

SUMMARY

The parental right of educating their children is a human right laid down in the German Federal Constitution, which we call "Basic Law" (*Grundgesetz*). The article 6 subsection 2 is: "The care and upbringing of children are the natural right of parents and primarily incumbent on them. It is the responsibility of the community to ensure that they perform this duty."

This parental right is understood as an extensive right of the parents. Firstly, in terms of the German school system, this right means, that parents can decide if their child should attend a private school or a state school; if parents do not make any decision, the child will have to attend a state school (in practice not many parents realize that right of choosing a school for their child: only 5% of all German pupils attend private schools!).

Secondly, it means parents have the right to decide if their child should take part in religious instruction. This subject (religious education) exists by Federal Constitution (Article 7 subsection 3) in most of the states inside Germany (the *Länder*). It is a normal subject in the state schools, but people are entitled to decline taking this subject (from the age of 14 it is a right of the children themselves); if children are removed from religious instruction in school they often have to attend "ethics" instead.

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The third right parents have is to choose for their child one of the different kinds of middle/ secondary-schools. Normally parents can choose between the *Hauptschule* (for 5 or 6 years followed by vocational training), the *Realschule* (for 6 years, but on a higher academic level than the *Hauptschule*, and followed by vocational training), the *Gymnasium* (for 9 years, with the right to go to university afterwards) or, in some of the *Länder*, the *Gesamtschule*, which integrates all before-mentioned kinds of secondary schools and includes different levels. Because of the state's responsibility for all pupils, the state could refuse a decision parents made for their child on the grounds of equality of abilities and capabilities within one class.

The fourth right parents have by the German Constitutional Law is a right of information. This means that the school has to provide parents with all relevant information.

Besides these individual parental rights there are also collective rights for groups of parents, for example the parents of all the children in one class or in one school. These collective rights of parents can only be given by the different School Acts, not by the German Federal Constitution. All the *Länder* (who alone have the right of legislation in school affairs) nowadays have collective parental rights fixed in their School Acts.

The development in the German school system these days can be described as a movement towards more collective parental rights. There is the realization that the conditions in which schools exist are so different that specific directives from a central governing body like the Ministry of Education or one of the *Länder* will fail. Today there is much discussion of individual schools functioning autonomously. In this process towards more autonomy of the schools, regulations for this development need to be instituted, and these must be specific to the individual school. The development of appropriate regulations requires the involvement of all participants in a school, and very importantly, the parents.

The reality of parental rights in Germany is complicated. On one hand not all parents are involved in discussions about these rights in their child's school. Normally middle class parents will show interest, working class and immigrant families much less. The different interests of parents, based on their different cultural backgrounds, need representation; with all these varied ideas, one has to find a way of balancing and incorporating them within the parent groups.

Discussions about how to get parents more interested in school participation have not met with much success. Political parties, the unions, the churches and other groups try to start parent seminars, but as long as parents have no real right of participation and decisionmaking in the schools, most will not be interested. One only can hope that, with the development of more autonomy of individual schools, parents' interest in taking part in school affairs will grow.

On the other hand there are also sometimes problems between teachers and parents. Parent involvement in school will be seen as a kind of benefit for the teachers; parents can help by supporting teachers. But teachers often feel that a parental commitment seems to be a kind of control of teachers' work. Parental wishes often will be understood by teachers as a kind of criticism, of questioning the teacher's competence. Teachers (and headmasters/mistresses) in Germany have to learn to communicate with parents, and to see parent involvement in the school also as a benefit for them and the school. The basis of that is a kind of trust between teachers and parents which, in some German schools, needs improvement.

The fact that there is religious instruction in schools in Germany is very different from the situation in the U.S.A. This became the center of the discussion for workshop participants. The model given in Germany was compared with the regulations not only in the U.S.A., but also in Singapore, in Poland and in Sweden.

The second point in the discussion was the importance of parent involvement and the different experiences the participants could describe about ways to increase the engagement of parents.

The demands on the schools to encompass the diverse needs of an increasingly multicultural society will continue to grow. Schools will only be able to succeed in this purpose if there will be a strong and active participation of parents. In Germany this still is to be improved, and it seems that this question needs to be solved in other countries also.

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Family School Partnerships in a Multilingual, Multicultural Urban Community

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at Lowell

INTRODUCTION

In an urban community of over 105,000 with 27 schools, approximately 1200 educators provide instruction, support and direction for 14,800 school age children. Historically an immigrant and working class city once primarily populated by the Irish, French Canadians and Greeks, this northeastern Massachusetts city now offers the promise of the American Dream to the second largest population of Cambodians in the US, and a sizable population of Laotians, Dominicans, Puerto Ricans and other cultural and linguistic groups. Children from non-European backgrounds now constitute 53% of the student population, requiring six Transitional Bilingual Education programs for a population that boasts a total of 24 different languages. Unemployment, poor housing, language barriers, a recent recession in the technology industry that once supported the city, have all challenged the institutions in the city and contributed to strained relationships between the communities and its schools.

A team of educators and community leaders, including families representing various cultural and language groups, decided to initiate a pilot action research project to foster stronger family school partnerships. Though a major concern were those families seemingly least involved in the schools (such as the poorest families, or new immigrant families), the team ultimately decided that all family groups needed to be included. This decision was predicated on the belief that we could learn from all types of family groups, and that the project could provide a perspective from which to view the groups thought to be least involved.

SUMMARY

A Design Oversight Committee (DOSC) of 15 people including a principal, two teachers, four parents, two staff of the Parent Information Center (including the Student Assignment Officer, who was the liaison from the superintendent's office), one faculty, one staff and one consultant from the university's college of education, two Chapter 636 Facilitators, and two community leaders worked together to provide direction and support to the action research process which had two main goals: to get a profile of the current family school partnerships in the selected schools, and to offer interventions through training and other support measures to enhance the partnerships of interested school communities.

This group was the major decision-making body established to help accomplish the goals. They made decisions about how to collect the information to get this profile of the partnerships, including adapting the Epstein/Salinas survey to meet their needs; deciding how to distribute and collect the survey; when to conduct the survey and how the data should be reported back to the community.

Family members and teachers from five elementary schools and one middle school participated in the survey. A total of 3,094 four page surveys were sent to families in four languages (English, Khmer, Laotian, and Spanish). Two hundred and ninety educators (the majority of whom were teachers) were asked to complete a similar four page survey about family school partnerships. There was an 80% return from the families of elementary children, and a 31% return from the families of the middle school children. And 80% of the teachers responded. Before looking at the content of the responses, we knew that the high return in all language groups and from every school was a strong indication that families and educators were very interested in the topic, and were willing to take the time to share their ideas and concerns with us.

The process of collecting the data was as important as the data itself. Effective communication with all constituents is critical to learning how families and educators can forge relationships and programs to assist in the learning process. We learned from parents how to address the surveys to invite a stronger response from some non-European groups (e.g., make the greeting more personal). And we listened to the principal who advised us to send the survey home with elementary children as their only homework to ensure a stronger response. We sent two surveys, one in English and one in their native language, to families of children in bilingual programs to disallow language as a barrier to sharing their ideas with us. We offered the option of an interview in the event literacy or aversion to surveys was an issue (we had no interview requests).

Some of our preliminary data indicated that families have strong, positive feelings about the schools, and that over 95% feel welcome in the schools. Despite this, families wanted more contact with school personnel, through a variety of ways: (1) more teacher parent conferences, (2) more communication when children are doing well, (3) earlier contact when children are having problems.

On a regular basis, parents were highly involved in talking with their children about the importance of school (80%), in checking to see that their homework is done (77%). They were less involved with reading to them (57%), and least involved in volunteering in the classroom (19%) or anywhere in the school (11%).

A majority of educators (93%) agreed that parent involvement is important for a good school, and eighty-five percent (85%) believe that parents are welcome in their schools. Another large percentage (85%) also affirmed that parent involvement can help teachers be more effective with more students, and a slightly higher percentage (87%) agreed that parent involvement is important for student success in school.

Other important, related findings indicate that teachers (76%) believe that many parents do not know how to help their children with homework; however, eighty- five percent (85%) agree that parents could learn ways to assist their children, if shown how.

Teachers also indicated a strong interest in learning how to improve the family school connection; 73% agree that in-service training is needed to help implement parent involvement practices.

These data represent a fraction of our findings, and led us to specific collaborations with families and educators to plan programs and actions to improve and sustain ties between families and schools. The following points seem essential to success:

- A collaborative process with representative constituents is critical to the success of this type of action research. We believe more than anything else that our collaborative process is what yielded the wisdom that helped us receive such a high return.

- Reporting back to the community is important not only to share the findings, but to help with interpretation for the interventions.
- Whenever possible, model or modify a process or product that has been successful (like the Epstein/Salinas survey); it builds credibility and saves time.

PRESENTERS

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> *What I think is inappropriate, if not mean-spirited, is to assume that those families who have resources have values, and that those families who do not have resources, do not....If there's one place where we tend to be in agreement, it's about the values that we hold in relationship to our children; everybody wants to see their child do well, wants to see that their child is healthy, wants to see their child succeed in school, wants to see their child have a safe neighborhood in which to play, wants to see that child grow up feeling good about him- or herself.*
>
> *- Angela Blackwell*

> *As I travel across the country and talk to parents with disabled children, it is all too common that these parents are feeling very frustrated and very shut out because they feel as though we, as professionals, do not respect them, that we don't know how to appropriately involve them.*
>
> *- Judith Heumann*

Building Strong Relationships Between Schools and Parents of Multicultural Backgrounds

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INTRODUCTION

Exploring the lack of family support and its impact on educational achievement, the session discussed reasons for low family involvement and possible means of encouraging the increased participation of families. Variables which influence the level of family involvement were considered, such as low income level, level of (English) language ability, lack of experience outside community/neighborhood, varying cultural attitudes and expectations regarding homework and achievement measures/relationships between teachers and parents; and, on the teachers' end, previous experience/attitudes regarding parents, parents of differing ethnicities and parent involvement. Specific recruitment and retention strategies were discussed aimed at attracting volunteer parents to school sites.

The workshop was specifically designed for staff responsible for parent involvement programs serving parents from diverse cultural backgrounds. Participants attending the workshop were community liaisons, community workers, teachers, PTA representatives, school psychologists, law enforcement agents and parents.

SUMMARY

According to research conducted in Indiana by The Stoughton Group, 69% of parents perceive that they cannot be involved in the traditional parent involvement options provided by the schools. Parents from diverse ethnic backgrounds find it even more frustrating to connect with schools due to lack of sensitivity and awareness of cultural differences from educational institutions.

Common barriers to parent involvement include: Parents' understanding of traditional frames of reference which allow governments to dictate and control every aspect of education, including budget, curriculum, graduation requirements and examinations, choice of textbooks, teacher preparation and licensing, recruitment and assignment. Parents also perceive academic education as the school's job, not the parents' (who are concerned with moral education and character training).

Immigrant parents frequently lack knowledge about American customs and the operation of the school system, about the instructional activities and programs of the local school and about expectations for parent involvement.

Before plunging into programmatic change, it may be useful to consider a few preliminary thoughts. First, the area in which change will take place is the gap between the status quo and the vision of what can be, the starting position and the goal. There are many ways change can be affected and one of the first decisions to make might be to explore the individual's role as change agent. Second, achieving family involvement takes time, but efforts need results: participants will need to be reminded from time to time of the bigger picture, and to be recognized for their contributions in each phase. Third, success depends on the good will of many people. Begin to involve others from the start.

School districts may see involvement of multicultural families from a deficit model perspective, trying to free students and parents from faults and weaknesses of their backgrounds (Coleman and Hoffer, 1987; Coleman, et al., 1966), but deficits such as poverty cannot be completely remedied by the school, so the expectations are limited. But programs that assume deficits fail, and poverty does not have to be relieved before students can learn. Developing a theory and practice of valuing students and their families, of organizing and developing human and social resources in support of students can lead to a successful start. Successful programs proceed as a partnership, recognizing the contribution of each partner. The temptation for administrators is to make parents silent or non-voting partners. If parents see that something is working for their students, they will support it. Parents will quickly sense condescending attitudes and powerless roles. Most family involvement activities have historically been initiated by the school, and if a list of such activities were reviewed then various school personnel would be responsible for planning and conducting them.

The team brought together to formulate and monitor plans for strengthening family involvement should bring together sensitivity to the needs and interests of parents, access to community resources and the ability to marshal them. This team should be representative of the triad of schools, community and families. Among other activities, the team will work together on: A vision statement or equivalent; consensus of purpose, a plan for sustained outreach and meaningful family involvement; ways to enhance and strengthen commitment to family, community and school staff to students' education; a system of checks and balances; communications between school and home; a network of support for family involvement; evaluation and continuous improvement.

Successful parent involvement programs have features that are decisive.

- First, the program has goals and written policies. The process for setting goals and producing written policies is an important first step involving parents and others who can help support the efforts of children in school. Written policies give the program legitimacy, structure and strength.
- The process should also seek and consolidate administrative approval and support from the district central office and from the school principal.
- Roles and responsibilities for specific aspects of the plan are clear. The plan has funding from the main budget.
- Physical resources (meeting rooms, telephones, duplicating equipment) are available for parent involvement activities.
- Staff and parents receive training for roles and responsibilities.

PRESENTER

Patricia Gómez emigrated to the United States in 1982. She concluded her M.A. at the University of Oaxaca, Mexico in 1978. Since 1984 she has been involved in the field of parent education and has volunteered her services to a variety of organizations. In her current position as Parent, Family and Community Coordinator for the Santa Ana Unified School District, she designs and implements parenting trainings and programs addressing the needs of parents from diverse cultural backgrounds. Her expertise includes providing technical assistance in the implementation of parent involvement programs for classroom teachers and administrators, coordinating an annual parent conference which hosts an average of 1200 parents a year, offering seminars and workshops on parenting skills, and giving leadership training workshops and seminars locally as well as nationally.

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Family Reading: Promoting National Education Goals

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INTRODUCTION

The Family Reading Program is directed toward achievement of three National Education Goals: school-readiness for students (Goal 1); adult literacy (Goal 6); and parental involvement in education (Goal 8, enjoining schools to develop partnerships with parents). Family Reading is a model that promotes convergence among those goals. An overview was provided for the program operations and effectiveness in some 250 schools; relationships between policy and practice in the family-school-community partnership were explored. Originally an early childhood program, Family Reading has recently been extended to upper elementary and middle school grades.

The Family Reading Program is a workshop series for adult or adolescent family members in which they read interesting, multicultural children's literature and learn how to read and discuss those books with children. Reading and critical thinking strategies applicable to both generations are taught. The school-based workshops are both instructive and enjoyable; participants are eager to share their learning with their children. Books in English and Spanish are provided. The Family Reading Program has been in operation for 9 years and is supported by extensive staff development.

SUMMARY

The aims of the Family Reading Program are to:

- help school staff become family literacy educators
- motivate and equip adults to serve as literacy resources for their children
- foster adult literacy development
- establish partnerships between home, school and community.

While program sites are predominantly in low income communities, several schools in other areas have also adopted the program. Program research has indicated that families have developed positive reading relationships; children and adults are reading more and discussing books together; adults have developed their own learning skills. Teachers have taken on the new role of family educator and have learned how to involve parents in their children's education.

The Family Reading approach to strengthening family-school relationships has several distinctive features. First, the Family Reading model builds on strengths; it regards family members as resources who have something to contribute to the program. Further, defining literacy as a continuum from basic skills to higher order thinking, it encourages the literacy development of adults as well as children. Contrary to schools' traditional view of parents, Family Reading does not focus on parents solely as instrumental to their children's welfare, but rather attends to their independent needs and capabilities as adults as well. That ethos, together with the experiential and enjoyable nature of the Family Reading workshops, helps build strong family-school relationships. A final feature is the opportunity for professional growth of program teachers who collaborate with parents and university faculty and create new workshop units.

Participants in the conference session eagerly engaged in a hands-on demonstration of a Family Reading workshop. They also discussed such elements of program effectiveness as the appeal of multicultural children's books, establishment of enjoyable reading relationships, experiential learning and the need for schools to be proactive in reaching out to families. The presenter discussed issues in planning, implementing and sustaining the program, and helped participants explore applications to their own school or community contexts.

Those wishing to replicate the program may consult the presenter for staff development.

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PRESENTER

Ruth D. Handel, co-developer of the Family Reading Program, specializes in family literacy and home-school relationships. She is an Associate Professor of Education at Montclair State University in New Jersey, where she directs the Partnership for Family Reading. A regular consultant to school districts, she is also a frequent speaker at national and international conferences.

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> *Early, active family involvement with a disabled child has a profound effect on the child's emotional and educational development. Research confirms that improved student achievement, higher school attendance, reduced dropout rates and decreased delinquency results when parents are partners in their children's education. This is true for families from all economic, racial and cultural backgrounds. Additional research on the performance of high school students shows parents who are consistently informed about their children's progress enhance the child's potential for high achievement.*
>
> *- Judith Heumann*

Family Wellness: Survival Skills for Healthy Families

Valerie Hill
and Joe Hernandez
Family Wellness Associates

INTRODUCTION

"Survival Skills for Healthy Families" is a twelve hour program presented to large groups of families and individuals in a series of six two-hour sessions: (1) Parents in Healthy Families; (2) Children in Healthy Families; (3) Adult Relationships - Couples in Healthy Families; (4) As Children Grow—Change in Healthy Families; (5) Solving Family Problems; (6) Sex Drugs and You - Preparing Your Child for the World. Each session is organized around practical guidelines for healthy family interactions which are demonstrated and then practiced with the participants. Family Wellness takes groups of individuals and families and gives them the skills, support and practice to build on their existing healthy patterns and add new ways of living and working together that are healthy.

The course goals are to provide new tools to help families reclaim their pivotal role in providing for the health of their members; and to translate the information and skills of family therapists into a form readily available to, and usable by, the general population.

SUMMARY

Over 600 trained instructors have presented this course to over 75,000 families in the past twelve years. The course is a proven model for teaching skills, enhancing healthy family interactions and investing family members in each other and their community.

This material is currently being used with families in "gang neighborhoods," for court ordered child abuse offenders, for Family Preservation, for parental involvement in school districts throughout California, for family enrichment and by therapists as a model for individual and family therapy. The "Survival Skills" course is presented throughout the United States and in several other countries; Taiwan has a Family Wellness Center and has translated the interactive workbook; El Salvador has purchased instructor manuals and workbooks; Canada, Hong Kong, France, England, and Germany have done the same.

The particular effectiveness of the Survival Skills course in working with low, middle and high income families, uneducated through highly educated families, and various cultures comes from nine elements of the program:

- Instructors are chosen to fit the particular community's language and experience needs, for example Latino, single parent, or blended family.
- Locations are chosen (such as schools) that support families and provide on-going "teamwork" with parents.
- Family participation: all members, from children through extended family and support systems, are invited to attend the series. Since all family members contribute to the health and functioning of a family, skills and concepts are taught to enhance each member's understanding.
- Simple rules are offered that capture basic theory and put it into the words and concepts that make it believable and usable for families and individuals.
- Dramatization of real family situations and ways of working through problems is an important technique of the program. This use of role play makes the content believable and applicable. Drama captures the attention and interest of most participants because it approaches their various learning modalities: visual, auditory and kinesthetic.
- Family members are coached through their real life "stuck" places or problems. Participants are helped to play out their usual ways of handling a particular issue or problem, then given alternative options and coaching to help the option work. This reinforces for the individual, and dramatizes for the audience, how to "get what you want" without being abusive or using physical punishment. It demonstrates how to switch from arguing with a partner or child, to sticking to one subject, saying what you want, and building on what works.
- Visual aids are utilized to reinforce what is taught.
- Exercises are offered to reinforce program content and skills with support and the "truths" that participants have to share with each other.
- Reinforcing materials are provided for use at home/with a facilitator.

We believe that we have a framework that is particularly effective in supporting the role of parents and strengthening the skills of all family members (including children). We do this with the entire family present and involved in dramatizations which coach them to acquire skills and patterns that work.

Schools today are faced with the job of not only teaching curriculum and skills, but also teaching those social and personal skills that are critical for every human being. Many parents are overwhelmed or ill equipped to teach these skills. Additionally, many parents by culture stay away from schools as their way of honoring the importance of teachers, while other parents have only had contact with schools when there are problems and are not eager to meet school personnel or visit the school. Family Wellness provides specific curricula that reinforce the role of parenting today and the critical teamwork between parents and schools for the benefit of children.

Particular emphasis has been placed on training school personnel as the main resources for families. We have trained teachers, counselors, and administrators from schools. Schools and school districts are using Family Wellness to build parental involvement and develop teams with parents.

Because of our interest in supporting families throughout the community, a special emphasis has been placed on training instructors and presenting courses that reflect the ethnicity and culture of the participants. African American, Asian, Latino, Caucasian and Native American instructors have been trained and courses presented in their communities. Their most common professions are: teachers, principals, counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, parents, probation officers, chaplains, social workers, nurses, family life educators and community leaders. These trainings are held throughout the United States annually.

PRESENTERS

Dr. Joe Hernandez is a licensed Clinical Psychologist and an Associate/Trainer for Family Wellness Associates. He brings over fifteen years of experience in the field of counseling and eleven years of teaching the Wellness model in schools and the community.

Valerie Hill is responsible for the Health and Wellness Program for Clovis Unified School District. Her district has over 25,000 students in twenty five schools. Because of her efforts and the training of over 120 Family Wellness instructors for the district, Clovis' Wellness Program has administrative, community, industry and parental support.

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Transition from School to Work: Pathways to Satisfaction

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INTRODUCTION

Pathways to Satisfaction (PTS) focuses on student and parent involvement in the school to work transition process. The focus is on a population of individuals with mild disabilities. It involves the student in 93% of the sequential activities and the parents/caregivers in 34% of the activities. The remaining 7% are primarily administrative and require little decision making.

PTS has been piloted in ten rural school districts, one suburban and one urban district. The results are very positive and the restructuring of the model will include an increased parental participation of 10-12% for Draft #2. PTS is being piloted two regular education environments in the State of Wisconsin. Evaluative data will guide the model's development.

SUMMARY

The initial intention of this model is service to individuals with mild disabilities in inclusionary environments. Secondary use (for other populations) of the strategies and guidepost activities are applicable with supplementation/supplantation.

The Transition Model, Pathways to Satisfaction, is a student-centered model that authorizes and encourages self-determination (self-advocacy). It has five distinct phases. Each phase is student- driven and is facilitated by a trained Transition Specialist so that access to new and emerging academic and vocational programs is assured. These phases are described as:

Phase One: Focus Students work in small groups or individually with the Transition Facilitator and trained mentors. Activities are geared toward self-actualization, self-determination and goal setting. Typically, these activities should be initiated in Grades 7 or 8.

Phase Two: Information Synthesis Students work one/one or independently to pull together and analyze all information that will help in the school to work transition process. In most cases, the Comprehensive Vocational Assessment Plan, a component of PTS, is implemented. At the end of this phase, a list of strengths and areas of limitation will exist so that potential barriers can be dealt with. These activities take place in Grades 9 and 10.

Phase Three: Exploration Students pursue the interests they have discovered. Focus groups are assembled so that students learn from each other's decisions. They develop and implement strategies for overcoming barriers. Experiential community-based learning is initiated. Finally, visitations to potential postsecondary sites take place.

Phase Four: Connection Students are assisted in the specific process of connecting with their postsecondary outcome (e.g., apprenticeship interviews are scheduled, admissions conferences are held, life skill competencies are verified in an outcome-based education format). These activities typically take place in Grades 11 and 12.

Phase Five: Evaluation A comprehensive set of activities is initiated to track the successes and concerns of the individuals. Follow-up and follow-along strategies with ethnographic emphases are encouraged throughout.

The Transitions from Work to School: Pathways to Satisfaction Model is grounded in issues of school inclusion. If general education environments offer programmatic opportunities, they are explored. If they need to be supported or supplanted, they are. Further, the phases and guideposts are intended to be sequential and systematic. Finally, the PTS model assumes no need for comprehensive school restructuring, rather, it encourages flexibility to meet the needs of all learners in a school community. New and emerging programs (Tech Prep, Youth Apprenticeship, etc.) in vocational, traditionally academic or integrated curricular areas are most appropriate for implementation of PTS components.

The model has certain assumptions that will not be compromised.

- Learning is a lifelong activity. The National Transition Longitudinal Study of Special Education Students serves as a conceptual framework.
- Guideposts (or activities) will be initiated based upon interest and need. (Interpretive ethnographic approach.)

- Pathways to Satisfaction is intended to be a highly integratable model. It can be interfaced with other initiatives and/or local mandates.
- Respect is intended for all participants.
- Confidentiality will not be breached without consent.
- No path is rigid. Students may move from path to path as long as they move sequentially through the phases of the program.
- Self-advocacy is critical.
- The model is not delivered to students, rather it is available as a resource to students, parents and staff. The Bromfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Model guides such involvement.
- The model is an individualized learning format.
- Interagency collaboration is critical.

Success will be defined in many ways by different participants. Undergirding the process, the following issues will guide measurements of success:

- Appropriate employment is in place.
- Connection to and collaboration with postsecondary agencies has proven successful.
- Daily living competencies are in place.
- Completed portfolio skills are in place.
- Functional and/or academic competencies are appropriate for transition.

This brief case study shows how the model is implemented.

Mark is a bright individual with a mild learning disability. His parents are very concerned that the school years are ending and that his postsecondary success is questionable. They seek out the assistance of the Transition from School to Work: Pathways to Satisfaction model and its transition facilitator. The following sequential anecdotal plan shows us the key elements of the plan in Mark's particular case.

Grades 7 and 8: Mark was interviewed by the transition facilitator at his middle school. This was followed by some informal meetings with other students who were in similar situations. The small groups problem-solved and generated a list of postsecondary goals and ways to reach those goals. Curriculum-based vocational assessment activities were implemented in his Technology Education classes and in his Keyboarding class. Mark's parents were integrally involved in the thoughts and decisions that he pondered. During the middle of his 8th grade year, a high school was chosen and course selections were made.

The remainder of the transition time during his 8th grade year was dedicated to preparing for the leap to high school. Mark's assigned mentor helped in simplifying discussions.

Grades 9 and 10: Comprehensive vocational assessment strategies were very important to Mark because he had no definite postsecondary plan. He liked his work in the Technology Education classes, but also had wanted to pursue journalism. Activities in his case included a situational assessment of learning style, a community-based volunteer job shadowing experience, formal vocational assessment, State of Wisconsin Gateway Assessment, and numerous measures of interest. By the end of these two years, Mark had decided to pursue a career as a journalist and to keep his technology expertise as an avocation.

Grades 11 and 12: Mark explored several educational institutions. His facilitator did personal exploration to determine how far he would move and developed a personal budget to predict the financial success of his plan. Mark requested assistance of the staff and visitations were scheduled to four postsecondary institutions. Specific application was made and Mark was accepted at two institutions. Mark chose institution A and the facilitator worked with that campus to assemble a list of strengths that Mark would need to have to find long-term success at school. Mark and the facilitator then developed a presemester plan and Mark started to prepare for his transition. One particular need was an understanding of a different technological format. A plan was developed and Mark had sequential mission statements and plans.

During the fall of Mark's first year at school, the Transition Facilitator called the institution to check on Mark's success. After that call, the facilitator telephoned Mark. Ongoing communication was maintained to evaluate Mark's success and to maintain support for him.

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Organizing Parents and Communities for Educational Change

Betty Harris
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INTRODUCTION

The Community Liaison for Urban Education (CLUE) program has, as one of its major activities at the Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL), the task of implementing and assessing the effectiveness of a collaborative Parent-Community-School (PCS) process model for educational improvement. The process was developed and designed to initiate and sustain the involvement of nonadvantaged parents, community leaders, and community organizations in educational improvement activities with an emphasis on at-risk children and youth in high-risk communities. The program's approach to achieving this end is that of establishing efforts in urban-like neighborhoods and/or public housing complexes where community leaders and large populations of nonadvantaged parents are willing to work collaboratively to improve the educational environments of their children. More importantly, the development of appropriate and cooperative learning strategies is key to accommodating highly diverse educational levels during training activities.

SUMMARY

Efforts to improve the educational performance of high-risk children and youth rarely involve large numbers of parents of those students, yet these are the parents most needed to create change in the academic environment of the school. Unfortunately, many parents in nonadvantaged and minority communities feel alienated from schools. When they were students, they felt isolated and out of touch. Having themselves had less than positive experiences with schools, these adults are often the parents, grandparents, and other caretakers of academically unsuccessful children. They frequently believe that they are not valued as parents, caretakers, or individuals and respond in kind with negative attitudes toward schools. Negative relationships that have historically existed between school personnel and high-risk communities preclude changing patterns of nonparticipation by parents and others who live in those communities unless these issues are resolved.

Strategies for creating parent/community support structures should be developed by utilizing leadership among parents and throughout the community, and increasing the capacity to respond to both family and community needs and the needs of the school.

The following issues are critical to any effort to involve underrepresented parents and communities. First, respect for cultural, economic, social diversity and the consequences of isolation from the larger society are critical in understanding the dynamics of building partnerships between schools and previously isolated communities. Research fully supports the contention that minority and nonadvantaged parents and community members will become more involved when school personnel show a genuine respect for both individuals and the culture of the community.

Secondly, communication styles are particularly important in the valuing of cultural differences. It is vital that change agents, community leaders, and school personnel understand cultural differences in modes of communication. Self-assertion, spontaneity, emotional expressiveness, and forthrightness are among the characteristics identified as cultural speech patterns in many minority communities. These patterns are in direct conflict with the majority culture's relatively low-keyed, impersonal style of communication. This creates problems that can prevent open and honest discussions from occurring.

Leadership is key to the success of communities' efforts to improve educational experiences for their children. While outside experts can help with short-term problems or can serve as catalysts for change, they often fail to strengthen the organizational and problem-solving skills of parents and other community members. The unintended result is a feeling of deeper inadequacy on the part of the community. Educators and other professionals should not be identifying and defining the problem, but rather providing information, training activities and technical assistance, and guiding appropriate solutions through skill development activities for parents and members of the community.

Leadership must be nurtured at multiple levels throughout the community to ensure the necessary broad-based support. Shared responsibility and opportunity to lead must be built into learning and educational improvement projects. Leaders must be trustworthy and not perceived as having self-serving or hidden agendas that would detract from addressing the educational needs of the community.

In understanding the Parent-Community-School (PCS) partnership process, a distinction must be made between parent involvement and parent-community involvement. Parent involvement in educational processes of their children generally has a rather narrow focus centered on the school itself. The concept generally defines the role of the parent as adjunct to the school and its activities. Parent involvement is generally managed by school personnel and the school building is the center of activity.

On the other hand, parent-community involvement has a more comprehensive agenda. A broad and diverse set of stakeholders, e.g., parents, community members and service providers are involved. While the school often serves as the focal point of planning and coordinating resources to meet the needs of the total community, activities and programs generally function apart from school personnel and school property. Parent-community involvement generally addresses problems and issues that are further removed from direct interaction with school personnel.

The concept of a "center of activity" replaces the actual school building and serves as neutral territory. This neutral zone functions to coordinate cooperative efforts from parents, community organizations, social service agencies and school personnel to meet the needs of the community.

The center of activity serves as a "greenhouse" to nurture confidence and trust in parents as they learn to become the primary educators of their children and to encourage full expression of the needs and concerns of individual parents, the community and the school. Programs in the center of activity also provide parenting and group process and organizational skills, and offer student academic/skill-building activities.

It is expected that as parents grow in their understanding of the structure of the family and its impact on children, they will eventually feel confident enough to feed into established agencies and schools. In the meantime, parents and community members can operate on their own turf in the center of activity. This center might be a church, community center, recreation center or other available space.

Finally, the "greenhouse" is a place where power is equalized and parents, educators and other service providers can try new ways of interacting in a nurturing environment, can learn to appreciate their

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cultural differences and become comfortable in discussing sensitive issues regarding the educational progress of children in the community.

Project sponsors, directors, and field agents must understand the implications of parent/community involvement.

- Social, cultural, linguistic and educational differences can shade or distort the improvement efforts.
- Newly emerging leadership may surface power struggles and personality conflicts within the community similar to those that impact the community's relationships with other outside forces.
- It is not enough to understand and know the cultures of the community and the school, (1) it is necessary to know how to apply that knowledge and (2) it is important to know how to 'talk' to people who operate in worlds with a different culture and different social expectations.

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PRESENTER

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> *"Schools must find new ways to make the connection between parents, their children and the process of learning. Surely, parents have a powerful role in defining how children use their time in watching television and studying. But my concern, goes much deeper. The two most powerful groups of adults who can influence the course of education in this nation seem to be talking past each other."*
>
> *- Judith Heumann quoting Secretary Richard Riley*

Education: Parental Guidance Required

Gary M. Lloyd and
Joyce Muhlestein
Utah Center for Families
in Education
Utah State Office of Education
Mareid Horton
Utah PTA

INTRODUCTION

The session focused on services offered by the Utah Center for Families in Education and on Utah's selection as a demonstration site to teach the Family Education Plan, a unique 9-hour training program for parents. The parent training program focuses on three areas: Basic Values of a family, including the development of self-esteem, physical survival, love and belonging; Character Education, including information for the family on citizenship, respect, justice/fairness, responsibility and trustworthiness; students' development of academic skills and the ways parents and schools can communicate more effectively.

SUMMARY

During the past 1´ years over 2,000 parents in over 375 schools have received training in this unique and exciting program. Twelve schools in Utah were selected as pilot programs for a five year study of the model developed by Dr. Joyce Epstein of Johns Hopkins University. A two-hour television production on Family Involvement was developed by the Center and broadcast on Utah's PBS stations Also included in the presentation was information about the Center's EdInfo Hotline, a series of over 100 recorded messages on such topics as "Becoming a School Volunteer," "Career Planning Begins in Kindergarten," "Alcoholism and the Family." Parents in Utah can call in at no charge. Parents can also receive scripts of the messages at no charge from the Center library, which houses over three hundred current pamphlets, tapes and CD-ROM.

PRESENTERS

Gary Lloyd is Director of the Utah Center for Families in Education, a non-profit organization co- sponsored by the Utah State Office of Education and by the Utah PTA. Dr. Lloyd has been with the state education agency for a number of years and has coordinated several programs within the Applied Technology division before becoming Director of the Center. He chaired the Business

Department at Utah Valley State College before coming to the State Department of Education.

Mareid Horton is President of the Utah PTA and has served in the State PTA, local PTA and other organizations for over 25 years. She serves on the National PTA board, as well as several boards relating to family involvement in Utah.

Joyce Muhlestein is the immediate Past-President of the Utah PTA, and serves on the National PTA board. She is currently employed with the Utah Center for Families in Education and in a coordinating capacity with the Family Education Plan.

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Schools are part of where we can introduce young people to the world of work....But we're more interested in schools because that's how you prepare young people to take advantage of economic opportunity; you provide them with an education.
- Angela Blackwell

We need to think very deeply about what we are going to do to change the way parents feel as they walk through the door.
- Judith Heumann

Reaching Consensus on Meaningful Parent Involvement

Cara Lockett
Washington State PTA

INTRODUCTION

This interactive presentation was a hands-on training in how to conduct a parent involvement forum for an audience of parents, educators, and community members. While intended for use with one school at a time, this forum concept has been successfully managed with multiple schools. Very simple and easy to implement, it is designed to achieve increased communication and trust between the participants. The forum can be implemented at any school, from preschool through high school.

SUMMARY

The following instructions/questions are incorporated into each forum:

- Describe the current types of parent involvement in your school.
- How do most parents feel about the school?
- How does the staff feel about parent involvement in the school?
- School Environment - Describe ideal parent involvement, benefits? barriers?

General guidelines for facilitating this forum model include the following:

- Invite all parents and staff, as well as school board members, administrators and community members to attend your forum
- Seat participants at tables in small groups (4 to 6, if possible)
- Choose the discussion questions you will use, based on time available, school climate and current level of parent involvement in the school
- After the group hears your presentation, allow them to work through the discussion questions
- Have small groups report back to the entire group
- Summarize the results and provide them in written form to each participant at a later date

A definition of meaningful involvement used to facilitate forum discussion includes:

- Parents define their own level of involvement
- Parent influence must equal that of educators
- Parents and educators should treat each other with mutual respect
- Scheduling should accommodate needs of everyone
- Parents and educators on policy setting teams or site councils must receive the same training at the same time

PRESENTER

Cara Lockett is the president of the Washington State PTA and has made parent involvement her focus during two years in office. She also serves on the Parent Involvement Committee of the National PTA. Lockett has presented the parent involvement forum for the National PTA and for many PTAs across Washington State, as well as for the annual conference of the Commission on Student Learning (an agency of the Washington State's Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction).

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> *Only through local action by people demanding that laws are*
> *properly implemented, by people demanding that programs truly*
> *serve those they were designed to serve, by concerned and generous people*
> *who believe, as I do, that disabled Latino people, African Americans,*
> *Native Americans, Anglos, have the equal rights of all Americans*
> *to be able to participate in our communities freely.*
> *- Judith Heumann*

Family Support: The Missing Link in Family-School-Community Partnerships

Stephanie Lubin
Family Resource Coalition

INTRODUCTION

All family support programs are based on the following assumptions:

- Families have primary responsibility for their children's development and well-being; they need resources and supports that will enable them to fulfill that responsibility effectively.
- Healthy families are the foundation of a healthy society. Families who are unable to promote their children's development ultimately place the entire society at risk.
- Families operate as part of a total system. Children cannot be viewed as separate from their families, nor can families be viewed separately from their communities, their cultural heritage or the society at large. Decisions made on behalf of children must consider the ways in which these various systems are interconnected.
- The systems and institutions upon which families rely for support must assist families' efforts to effectively raise their children. They must adjust and coordinate their services so as not to hinder families' abilities to maintain positive environments for their children.

SUMMARY

America's families are under stress from many sources; the following statistics were adapted from Helping Children By Strengthening Families written by the Children's Defense Fund.

- *Declining Family Income*: 40% of all children in young families (headed by someone younger than 30) were living in poverty in 1990: full-time, year-round work at the minimum wage of $4.25 an hour gives a family of three an income that equals only 80% of the 1991 poverty level.
- *More Births to Teens*: In 1989 there were 517,989 births to women younger than 20, roughly 2/3 of these births were to unmarried teenagers, and about 1/4 of the total were repeat births.

- *Lack of Access to Health Care:* 40% of all children lacked employer health coverage in 1990, even though more than 85 per cent of all children lived in working families. The gaps in Medicaid and private insurance left 8.4 million children with no health insurance at all.
- *Growing Hunger and Homelessness:* About 5.5 million children younger than twelve (1 in 8) do not regularly get enough to eat; an estimated 100,000 children go to sleep homeless each night.

More children and families are in crisis; more than 4.5 million women of childbearing age were current users of illegal drugs in 1990; an estimated 2.7 million children were reported abused or neglected in 1991, up from 1.1 million in 1980; in 1990 an estimated 407,000 children were in foster care, an increase of almost 50% since 1986.

The principles of family support:

- The basic relationship between program and family is one of equality and respect. The program's first priority is to establish and maintain this relationship as the vehicle through which growth and change can occur.
- Participants are a vital resource. Programs facilitate parents' ability to serve as resources to each other, to participate in program decision and governance, and to advocate for themselves in the broader community.
- Programs are community-based and culturally and socially relevant to the families they serve. Programs are often a bridge between families and other services outside the scope of the program.
- Parent education, information about human development, and skill building for parents are essential elements of every program.
- Programs are voluntary and seeking support and information is viewed as a sign of family strength, not as indicative of deficits and problems.

Following are brief descriptions of programs incorporating the philosophy of the Family Resource Coalition.

1. *The Vaughn Next Century Learning Center* uses two converted classrooms at Vaughn Elementary School (Los Angeles Unified School District). It is a collaboration between Los Angeles Educational Partnership, United Way (North Angeles Region) and the Los Angeles Unified School District. Vaughn's governing board is composed equally

of parents and school representatives/social service providers; because the board is accountable to customers rather than to the institution of the school, they have the opportunity to create a new culture that can advocate for families and children more freely.

The program provides integrated, school-linked health and social services coupled with quality early childhood programs. Parents are the heartbeat of the program, donating time rather than money via a service exchange bank (involving transportation, childcare, gardening, painting, etc.). Counseling and support groups are conducted in both Spanish and English; individual counseling is available as well as anti-gang counseling, psychological testing, father education and support groups.

The Vaughn program was established in 1992 following a community assessment focusing primarily on the needs of families, rather than on the availability and quality of services in the community; regular town meetings are held to elicit feedback from community residents about the responsiveness of the Vaughn Center. The goals of the Vaughn Center are: (1) for children birth to age five, full child development and school readiness; (2) for children six to 12, full youth development and strong academic achievement; (3) for families, effective caregivers, good problem-solving skills, economic stability, decreased risk factors. The Center is located in a racially mixed (83% Latino, 17% African American), densely populated community in which 40% of the residents live below poverty level.

For more information contact Yoland Trevino, Director, Vaughn Next Century Learning Center, 13330 Vaughn Street, San Fernando, CA 91340.

2. *Caring Communities Program* (CCP) is a school-based, family- and neighborhood-focused integrated services delivery system which operates out of three schools (elementary and middle) in the north St. Louis (MO) neighborhood of Walnut Park; the community is predominately African American. Guided by an Afrocentric philosophy, self-defined as "using both positive and practical African and African American concepts and philosophy as the focus for defining our individual and collective lifestyles," the philosophy is based on the *Nguzo Saba* (Seven Principles) which are celebrated during Kwanzaa.

CCP was established in 1989 as a collaborative effort between the Danforth Foundation and four state agencies (Missouri Departments of Elementary and Secondary Education, Mental Health, Social Services and Health). Most participating families are referred to the program by a teacher or school administrator. Door-to-door canvassing and community meetings were utilized to learn what needs families could identify and to raise interest in the project.

The goals of CCP are to ensure that children (1) achieve sustained and increased success in school, (2) remain safely in their homes with their families, reducing the need for out-of-home placement and (3) remain out of the juvenile justice system. Empowering parents to take control of their lives and make a difference for their children is a key component of CCP; parents are supported in building on their strengths while breaking down their personal barriers to success. An advisory board is composed of neighborhood residents; parents; school personnel; community, civic and religious leaders, and agency representatives.

For more information contact Khatib Waheed, Director, Caring Communities Program, 4411 North Newstead, St. Louis, MO 63115.

3. *Family Resource Schools* (FRS) provide traditional, student-focused, academic support programs and offer school-based, nontraditional, family-focused programs. FRS is a unique partnership between Denver Public Schools, the city of Denver, businesses, community organizations and foundations; FRS schools operate in seven predominantly inner-city elementary schools. Four FRS schools are located in west Denver in a low-income and predominantly Latino community; two are in northeast Denver in a community consisting primarily of low- and middle- income African Americans; another school is located in southwest Denver in a predominantly white, suburban community.

Site coordinators are responsible for school, parent and community outreach. The goals of the program are (1) to prevent school failure and enhance school readiness, (2) to increase parental involvement in schools, (3) to coordinate available, existing services for families and (4) to promote family growth toward self-sufficiency. Schools are open at least two nights a week until 9 p.m.; programs run in classrooms, the auditorium, the cafeteria and the gym, after school hours; some FRS schools have space for a separate resource room.

Governance at the school level is carried out by collaborative decision-making teams composed of principals, teachers, parents, business representatives and others; meetings are public; additionally there is an advisory committee comprised of school administrators, city representatives, funders, principals and other program staff. FRS links existing resources and establishes meaningful relationships with agency personnel; i many instance, program staff develop a kind of barter system with other resource people in their community. FRS has additional linkages with (1) the Department of Parks and Recreation, which offers after-school programs, (2) the Department of Social Services, whose child protective services workers provide technical assistance to school staff and families, (3) public service company employees, who participate in school governance and as volunteers, (4) Community College of Denver, which provides adult education classes in the schools, and (5) King Soopers grocery chain which offers student and parent scholarships.

For additional information, contact Lucy Trujillo, Project Coordinator, Family Resource Schools, 975 Grant Street, Denver, CO 80203.

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There exists talent, potential and ability inside each and every one of us, regardless of the significance of our disability.
- Judith Heumann

Family-community partnerships can help make democracy work. In every urban school in the United States you are dealing with the problem of the haves and the have-nots. And the way that you deal with it is going to make some contribution to the way the country deals with it.
- Don Davies

Kids House: Neighborhood Based After-School Program

Brenda Lynch
and Dee Dee Logan
Marcus A. Foster Educational Institute

INTRODUCTION

Kids House provides low-cost, structured after school care, tutoring and support to middleschool children attending Oakland Public Schools in Oakland, California.

SUMMARY

The Kids House program of the Marcus A. Foster Educational Institute supports the academic, social and personal development of the youth we serve by strengthening relationships between schools and families, parents/caregivers and children and neighborhoods and children.

Kids House strongly supports the notion that where community exists it confers upon its members identity, a sense of belonging and a measure of security. Kids House provides a sense of community that some of the children can't find anywhere else. For families and schools Kids House provides an avenue of direct access to support youth.

Kids House is designed to provide middle-school children with an after school environment that is safe and supervised, structured and caring. Each Kids House is set up in the home of a caring parent or community member (selected by a committee of school, community and Institute representatives) and in close proximity to the school. The house is run by a Parent Coordinator (provider) with the help of tutors. Professional help from case managers and group facilitators is available. Snacks are provided and rules are posted and enforced with firmness and care. The kids love it and they need it. Many Kids House children are in foster care or living with their grandparents. At Kids House they feel wanted and secure and they become more responsible, more self-confident and more successful at their schoolwork. The Parent Coordinator maintains contact with the school and with families by written notes, newsletter, phone calls and home visits, increasing communication and awareness in the family, school and community. In this nurturing environment, children who have been emotionally and academically stunted can begin to grow again.

A 1992 Carnegie Corporation study noted that millions of adolescents spend much of their free time without supervision - and fully 40% of their time is discretionary. The study went on to document the adolescent's desire for community-based activities and programs as well as the efficacy of such programs in promoting positive behavior and reducing high-risk behavior - but too few such programs exist. Worse, in the Bay Area, programs serving middle-school children (6th-9th grades) comprise only 4% of community-based educational programs according to a study by the Stanford Center for the Study of Families, Children and Youth (now Community Network for Youth Development). These children are at one of the most vulnerable periods of their lives. By providing positive peer interactions within a supervised and structured environment, Kids House serves to counterbalance the powerful influence peers exert in the afternoon and evening hours on Oakland's streets. Put simply, it gives at-risk kids a real chance.

But Kids House is more than an after school program. It provides an avenue for strengthening neighborhoods by providing parents, community members and others opportunities to become involved in the academic, personal and social development of its youth - strengthening the core of our communities - our youth. Kids House has created a linkage for children, schools and the neighborhood in the Sobrante Park and Towler Heights communities of Oakland. The Marcus Foster Institute through Kids House has developed an alliance with the Sobrante Park Consortium, Madison Middle School teachers, administrators, students and members of the community. This alliance is bringing citizens and community stakeholders together for the first time in many years to develop programs and new strategies to strengthen the neighborhood and reach out to children.

The seven existing Kids Houses have received tremendous support from parents, the community and the schools. While Kids House cannot help every child in Oakland, it can make a substantial difference in the lives of some of those who need the most. There is an old African proverb that it takes a community to raise a child. The Kids House initiative offers an opportunity for new community support to develop within our inner-city neighborhoods, a community that will support and nurture the children within its walls and help us with the difficult task of raising our children.

A Kids House is easy to start. The main thing you need is a parent or community member who is home in the afternoons and willing to set aside one room in the house as a study hall. Start at the local school. Describe how a Kids House works and how the children, the school and community will benefit. School personnel may have suggestions and they will prove valuable later on in getting the word out to students and parents.

Decide how many children you can handle. A good program usually has at least four, but not more than 15. Recruit students from the community around your Kids House unless you have reliable and appropriate transportation for kids. Make sure you involve parents in the process so that they feel some sense of ownership and responsibility for the program. For each child you will need a parental consent form.

Once you get your Kids House started, you'll find that things would be easier with a few books and supplies. Talk to your schools about borrowing texts and reference books. Talk to local businesses and service groups about donating other materials including those all-important snacks.

If your Kids House is too much like school, you may recreate patterns of behavior that will get in your way. Make Kids House different with its own rules for interactions. "Family Time" is a time for sharing for kids when they can talk about their personal successes and the obstacles they encountered during the day. Provide encouragement and praise. Monitor kids' attendance and their school grades and support them in striving for personal growth.

Keep families informed. Send home bulletins describing activities at Kids House. Keep in contact with parents by phone, resolving issues or just touching base. Encourage participation and provide sessions with parents in helping their children at home. Remember that Kids House is a home away from home.

Staffing for your Kids House will depend on your needs and resources. Oakland's project has a Program Director (responsible for program design, staffing and fundraising), the House Caregiver, an Algebra Project facilitator, two paid tutors and a community services counselor. Volunteer staff include math and computer science teachers from the school who work on special projects.

Volunteers may be available from your local college education department, your local high school, volunteer organizations or the community. Identify the help you need and be specific when you ask.

The Marcus A. Foster Institute will be producing a Kids House Handbook in Fall '95.

PRESENTERS

Brenda S. Lynch has been Program Director with the Marcus A. Foster Educational Institute since 1989. Ms. Lynch's responsibilities include the Institute's Home-School Connections programs; Kids House, Focus on Families Mini-grants, and Whole Village Network. She also has responsibility for the Moot Court Program, Institute Scholarships as well as several school-linked services programs. Ms. Lynch has been the Program Director of Kids House since its inception at the Institute in 1992.

Ms. Lynch has a B.A. in Sociology from Chapman University, M.A. in Urban and Regional Planning from Michigan State University and is completing doctoral studies at the University of San Francisco in Education.

Wornia D. (Dee Dee) Logan has been with the Oakland Public Schools since 1992 as Community Assistant and Coordinator of the "Take Home Computer" program. In 1992 she joined the Marcus A. Foster Educational Institute as Family/Community Liaison for Kids House after school tutorial and enrichment initiative. During 1992-94, Mrs. Logan was a Kids House provider for 8-15 students.

Mrs. Logan involves herself with several community outreach projects and boards including, founder and president of Family Readiness Network, King Estates Junior High School Mental Health Team, Site Base Development Team, Committee Facilitator with the Dr. James P. Comer Educational Development School Change Model, Member Board of Trustees and Coordinator Membership Services Love Center Ministries. She has served as spokesperson for Oakland Community Organizers, an interdenominational coalition of church leaders.

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Partnership and Competition

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INTRODUCTION

Parental involvement has been proclaimed by schools, parent councils and governments; however, while it is accepted that parents have a major role as educators, considerable shift seems to have taken place, a shift which emphasizes partnerships which closely link schools with the workplace and the competencies expected for productivity rather than with the promotion of parent involvement. The questions this presentation asked were, "In this move has the contribution of parents been downplayed?" and "Is it really only those schools which are comprised of certain socioeconomic groups that can involve parents, or can a community which believes in the home, school and community connection expand relationships for the benefit of students?"

SUMMARY

In the International Year of the Family much emphasis has been placed on building home-school relations and declaring the benefit of the parental contribution to children's learning. This presentation centered on activities and research in the Australian context; these revealed that parents can educate their children, particularly with concentration on life skills prior to their entry to the formal education system, for example, through the West Heidelberg Early Literacy Project (Toomey and Sloane, 1993:87). Furthermore, the reciprocal support of parents and teachers was highlighted (McGilp and Michael, 1994:40). The difference between parental involvement in the primary and secondary sectors of education revealed a greater link with the workforce of the wider community by the latter; this did not necessarily include parents of students in the schools. What became important in the presentation was the use of a continuum which showed that the emphasis of some of the education in schools had now become linked to social and environmental issues which meant the use of professional services which might involve parents more by coincidence than by intent.

In considering both the parental contribution and that of the wider community to children's education, it was stressed that little differentiation has been made between the terms "participation" and "involvement" and now the term "partnership" is receiving emphasis. The reality is that the growing introduction of partnerships between schools and industry has been highlighted internationally (Gibbs, Hedge and Clough, 1992:51). The paren[illegible] contribution of working in schools, or acting in the "contact" capacity, was argued to be mainly of the gift category. However, it could be equally seen as "synergy" when this is defined as "active involvement, collaboration and cooperation between parties for neither could achieve on its own" (Gibbs, Hedge and Clough, 1992:38) for the benefit of students' learning.

The gains of partnerships became a focus of the presentation - students gain an impression of the real world of work (Price, 1991:2), gain "knowledge and skills necessary for continued competitiveness" (Price, 1992:17) and develop "enterprise, risk taking and interactive skills" (Price, 1991:2). Gains for teachers have been listed as confidence, (Dean, 1991), adaptability and technological coherence (Gibbs, Hedge and Clough, 1992:140). In general, schools gain school pride, career guidance, and assistance with behavior modification (McFarlane, 1982:9). Schools also gain financial support, for example, through the Bedgerebong Trust (Squires and Allen 1992:4). Other claims are that partnerships result in better educated citizenry and have public support; it was also seen that some educators are vying for the adoption of "more of the characteristics of a good workplace" (Poole and Evans, 1992:128).

While it was recognized that formal partnerships have benefits, certainly community ventures, as a result of peoples' generosity, to the present, have extended primary children's understanding of the local scene. Secondary students, too, have gained from the community's contribution to projects; some have created a sense of self worth and community for them and tapped their latent potential (McFarlane, 1982:39). What was seen as important was that some of the benefits attributed to formal partnership agreements are already attributes of schools. The whole question of partnerships was seen against the backdrop of Australian society, an intercultural and multicultural society, one recovering from high unemployment and which has been described as an "unstable society where social purposes are traduced, public assets stripped, public institutions gutted and the struggle towards democracy betrayed" (Bates, 1993:1). Amalgamations and closures of schools had also affected partnerships agreements.

The areas which were stressed as needing consideration if partnerships are to be formed between schools and the home successfully are:

- trust between parents and teachers
- a value base for school life
- students' learning patterns
- a global perspective for education
- training opportunities for parents
- partnership arrangements with the community at large
- recent research in the areas of partnerships; this includes the parental contribution

Why were these issues raised? There are specifications that teachers will promote tolerance, honesty, fairness, social diversity and cultural difference; and learning communities will work together on teaching policy, curriculum and staff development (Australian Teaching Council, 1994:7). Also, parent groups are restating their claims; they have the right to choose their children's education and to achieve equity (Australian Parent Council as cited by Pace, 1994:10). However, parents are also suffering from the gap between the haves and the have-nots in society. The alienation of families in society, their struggle to survive and the lack of skills of some parents for helping their children (Lueder, 1993:157) are issues. Struggles for families are further listed as fragmentation, change, isolation, depersonalization, powerlessness and normlessness, experienced through a loss of community (Soliman, 1991:56).

In addressing the issues as listed, perhaps at this time there needs to be a changed approach to requests placed on parents or concentration could be on reconsidering the provision of training programs which help parents enter or re-enter the school scene. There is still "a silent majority" (Toomey, 1989) which is not involved in schools. While consensus is more readily achieved between parents and teachers of similar socioeconomic background (Connell et al, 1982: Sharpe, 1987; Laureen, 1990 as cited by McGraw, Piper, Banks and Evans, 1992:55), it is necessary for teachers to address the equity issue constantly.
(For references, please contact presenter)

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Organizational and Educational Tools for Multicultural Communities

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INTRODUCTION

The presentation focussed on culturally competent services within a systems model perspective. These services are particularly important for culturally and linguistically diverse youth who have emotional or behavioral problems. These youth do poorly in school, frequently drop out, and often face a future of unemployment and incarceration. Improving outcomes for these youth requires collaborative, community-based, youth and family-directed, culturally competent services.

SUMMARY

The initial format was to have each presenter do a 20-minute overview on issues as they relate to severely emotionally disturbed youth and their families and services within the Asian and Latino communities. The remainder of the time was to be devoted to a question and answer session. The presenters, however, decided to change the format and try something more interactive and less formal. They wanted the workshop to reflect their philosophy of including parents, care givers and other involved in the delivery of services.

The presenters rearranged the chairs to form a circle. They spaced themselves equally around the circle which did away with there being a "front," a focal point. Instead of the presenters being in front lecturing "to" the audience, they became a part of the circle. As participants entered the room, they were asked how they would say "hello" in various languages. The presentation began and ended in Spanish. It was felt that language and culture were critical elements of the presentation and therefore needed to be infused into the discussion. For those who did not speak Spanish, the Spanish portions offered an opportunity for them to experience, albeit for only a brief minute, what it is like to parents who do not understand English and are therefore unable to understand what is going on around them, in other words, to confront an English speaking environment. Cultural competency requires that information be given in such a manner that the person can truly understand what is being said.

While the presenters had determined ahead of time several questions/topics which were important to discuss, they left the presentation open enough to invite questions and comments from the participants. One presenter would raise an issue and ask the other two to comment on it creating an informal dialogue. The participants were welcomed to join in the discussion at any given point.

Schools have a responsibility to be sensitive to the needs and strengths of culturally diverse youth and their families and to incorporate culturally competent services into their operations. If schools are to provide culturally competent services, it requires that the student is understood within the context of a greater system. This system includes the student, his/her family, a community, the schools and service providers such as health, mental health and social service workers.

Culturally competent services recognize the cultural context of a service providers' orientation as well as the way families and social networks form a critical part of a student's support system. These services go beyond acknowledging cultural differences. Such an approach goes beyond acknowledging that there are cultural differences: they engage families as partners and modify services to address different world views and different ways of defining what is successful. Modifications can be something as simple as translating information to ensure that the parents understand what is happening at the schools or as formidable as confronting biases that are built into traditional service delivery models.

Such a perspective also understands the stresses of living in a bi-cultural world and the need to address services at all levels of intervention. A lack of understanding of these critical dynamics can lead to poor assessment of a student's needs and strengths and result in an inappropriate treatment plan. Furthermore, it can create barriers that make it difficult to interact with the parents.

Two Japanese concepts, *ichigo ichiye* and *okagesama de* were discussed. Both refer to how individuals are all interrelated and how they are interdependent. The first means "we meet this way but once" for we are always being influenced by that which is happening to each of us minute by minute. We are constantly changed by each interaction, therefore we meet this way but once.

The second concept, *okagesama de,* is used in everyday language as "thanks," but the literal translation means "for all those unforeseen acts." There are many things which influence us which we did not directly witness, and indeed may not even be aware of. The fact that we are ignorant of such matters does not minimize the importance nor the relevance of those occurrences in a person's life.

The example used to illustrate both concepts involved three young Vietnamese children who witnessed the violent death of their mother. Obviously that experience will forever change them, they will never be the same. During an early therapy session, each was given a set of "worry dolls" which were made in Guatemala. The children were told that they could tell the troubles to the dolls who would worry for them. In this manner the children were able to go to sleep at night, free of nightmares. The day after receiving the dolls, they excitedly exclaimed "It worked, it worked, we didn't have to worry last night!" A total stranger in Guatemala, whom the children will never see, made those dolls which were then sent to the United States, bought by a Japanese American therapist and given to three young Vietnamese children who had been severely traumatized. All of their lives became interwoven and were influenced by actions which the others did not witness. *Ichigo ichiye, Okagesma de.*

The fact that a parent may not speak English and is therefore not able to help a student on school related issues can be a critical factor in helping the student. It is up to each service provider to be sensitive to and aware of those silent factors if we are to provide adequate services to our children, if we are to understand and work cooperatively with their parents. Cultural values can clearly influence who we are. If we are to truly understand students and parents who are culturally and linguistically different, we must understand how these factors impact on the person in front of us.

The reaction from the participants was very favorable, both to the format and the content of the presentation. They liked the interactive, dialogue type of presentation versus the traditional lecture. It gave them an opportunity to voice their opinions as well as discuss issues more in depth. A few were initially uncomfortable, preferring to have "the experts" tell them the right answers. It became apparent, however, that this approach only replicates the type of system which frequently places students and their parents at a disadvantage because it does not recognize the expertise the parents bring with them, it does not empower them.

This approach is very easy to replicate but works better with smaller audiences. Three presenters appeared to be an ideal number. It is important to spread the presenters throughout the circle so that there isn't a "power" position created within the circle, a place where the "experts" are congregated.

The drawback to this approach is that it limits the amount of information which can be given. It does, however, offer a chance to go into more depth on fewer topics. This invites interaction from participants which means that the presenters may be challenged more because of questions which are raised. The other challenge to the presenters is making sure that such a free floating type of discussion does indeed provide enough structure so that critical information is disseminated. One possible approach is to determine ahead of time which topics will definitely be discussed, or else ask the audience what they feel is important. Any of the presenters can bring the discussion back to the topic at hand but identifying one person to act as a moderator helps this process.

PRESENTERS

Hector Mendez is President of the National Fiesta Educativa and is very active in promoting culturally competent services to the Spanish speaking population. He directs the La Familia Counseling Center in Hayward, California.

Dr. D.J. Ida is Director of Child and Adolescent Services at the Asian Pacific Center for Human Development in Denver. A/PCHD is a specialty mental health clinic which provides services to the various Asian communities throughout the state of Colorado.

Dr. David Osher works at the Chesapeake Institute and helps the Office of Special Education Programs develop the *National Agenda to Improve Results for Children and Youth with Serious Emotional Disturbance* whose seven targets include: valuing and addressing diversity, collaborating with families, and creating comprehensive and collaborative systems.

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Workshops for Educators to Build School-Family Partnerships

Oliver Moles,
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INTRODUCTION

This session described a sourcebook designed to give urban educators new information and strategies for working with parents of elementary school students (grades K-6).

Five workshops, written by eminent developers, explore how family life, school programs, teacher practices and district policies can help build school-family partnerships for learning. Each workshop is based on recent research and best available practices. The intended audience is primarily teachers, administrators and other school personnel.

SUMMARY

Four key concepts are threaded through these workshops: school-family partnership, home learning activities, home learning environments and family strengths. Home learning as defined here includes homework, leisure reading, family discussions and other home activities which supplement and reinforce schoolwork.

Many studies indicate that school-initiated activities to change the home educational environment can exert a strong influence on student learning, even in schools serving low-income and minority families. This sourcebook demonstrates various ways that schools can take the initiative in reaching out and working with families as equal partners.

Each set of workshop materials contains a leader's guide, transparency masters and a set of handouts to be reproduced for participants. The leader's guide includes an overview of the workshop, notes on needed preparations, background information and suggestions for ways to conduct each workshop activity.
Guidance for a two hour version is found within each workshop. Each has an optional warm-up activity and most include planning for next steps. All material was pilot tested during the 1992-93 school year.

Families as Learning Environments: Topics in this initial workshop include the benefits of parent involvement in home learning, characteristics of successful home learning environments and the diversity of contemporary American families. It aims to help participants recognize both family strengths and the obstacles families face, and begins to explore how school resources can help them build more successful learning environments.

Communication Skills and Strategies: In this workshop participants are helped to analyze and develop their competencies for interpersonal communication with diverse parents. School and staff practices that may hinder and improve school-family communication are studied. Local communication practices for different occasions are analyzed in terms of making them more effective.

Homework and Home Learning Activities: High quality homework assignments and helping families reinforce and extend classroom instruction are central to this workshop. The related research is reviewed, and the importance of schoolwide homework guidelines and practices, as well as the teacher's role, are discussed. Interactive home learning assignments are developed and some family learning programs identified.

School Programs and Practices: This workshop helps participants identify schoolwide factors that promote or hinder the development of school-family partnerships. It discusses five kinds of partnership roles, and uses this information to analyze two case studies. It makes the case for schoolwide actions to build strong partnerships with families.

School Districts: This workshop focuses on district-wide policies and policy supports for effective school-family partnership programs. Supports for policy during its development, implementation and maintenance are considered as well as some existing school board policies, case studies of actual policy implementation and the current research literature. This workshop is designed for school board members and others engaged in district-level policy development or review.

Appendix: Presents information on (1) further strategies to reach and involve parents, (2) federal government programs, (3) families of different racial, ethnic and nationality backgrounds, (4) annotated lists of readings and resource organizations and (5) a participant evaluation form.

There is no charge for the sourcebook, but supplies are very limited. It is about 300 pages, and comes on 3-hole paper. All parts may be reproduced without permission. *Only K-6 staff developers and trainers in school systems can be sent copies.*

PRESENTERS

For further information write to:

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All of the money, and all of the programs in the world, won't do the job unless you get involved in the process yourselves.
- Judith Heumann

In parent centers, for example, you are trying to show mothers and fathers that the school can work for them, giving them some voice in how that school should be run and helping them make connections with government agencies. This is an important building block in establishing people's confidence in the important institutions in their lives. That is what is what family community partnerships are all about.
- Don Davies

It Takes a Community to Raise a Child

Charles Moore
and Lorrie Jordan
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Fullerton

INTRODUCTION

The presenters focused on the participation level of the child's family and its radiation outward toward the various community members and organizations that are also available for creative participation. Discussion centered on the need for parents to lay a firm groundwork that can support their child's confidence and success in school, and for teachers and administrators to go beyond the school hour, organizing educational activities that are success oriented and build self esteem.

SUMMARY

Simple suggestions were offered to assist parents to more effectively encourage their child's academic career and well-being. Parent/child/teacher participatory programs were introduced, specifically the "Saturday Academy" and the "3.0 Club," that can benefit both the child and parent through a challenging curriculum. Both programs are unique in their applicability to diverse populations.

The need to secure a healthy home life to help prepare a child to face social and political challenges should be a parent's (and community's) priority. Without such preparation, the child will be left to garner his/her own interpretation of what life has to offer; in many cases this picture will be bleak due to factors including racism, discrimination and rife deficiencies in the underrepresented child's life. However, with the guidance of the family and community, the child will be lead through these obstacles with a more realized sense of worth and value.

Parents can implement practices in their daily life such as eating meals with their children, meeting their children's teachers, and staying aware and considerate of the challenges their children face: such behaviors on the part of caregivers help empower children with needed life skills. Additionally, schools and families can organize after school programs in which the child and parent can participate together. The "Saturday Academy" (a high school program) offers children and parents an opportunity to explore the history of their ancestors, offered from the ancestors' perspective.

For more information about the "Saturday Academy" or "3.0 Club," please contact the presenters.

PRESENTERS

Charles Moore is the Coordinator of University Outreach Relations with Schools and colleges at California State University, Fullerton. He has completed his Masters degree in Southern California, and has been instrumental for the past ten years in identifying student needs, and organizing programs to meet those needs.

Lorrie Jordan is a Counselor for Cal State Fullerton's University Outreach as well as Coordinator of a State funded program entitled Choices 2000. She has been involved with student needs/counseling for the past five years.

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> *All of you need to go back to the projects you're working on or the schools you're involved in and ask some serious questions about whether or not you are really involving parents who have disabled children....Go and find some of the parents who have disabled children and ask them whether or not they feel welcomed into the programs you're running, whether they feel as though you've actually asked them to participate in the design and implementation of programs.*
>
> *- Judith Heumann*

Parents Are Teachers Too (PATT)

Kimberly Muhammad
Comprehensive Parent Training Program
Chicago Public Schools

INTRODUCTION

Education research overwhelmingly supports the conclusion that parents are the first and most influential educators of their children, and that parents have repeatedly indicated the desire to help their children learn. Parents are Teachers Too (PATT) describes a comprehensive and systematic parent training program designed for parents of under-achieving students enrolled in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Chapter 1 Program at the Chicago Public Schools. The program is aimed at improving the academic achievement of Chapter 1 students.

SUMMARY

In light of the expressed desire of parents to help teach their children, their plea for more intensive training, and support from recent research, a pilot training program, PATT, was implemented to document that, if properly trained, parents can have a positive impact upon student achievement.

Several strategies were developed to provide parents from three Chicago public schools with intensive parent training, home-learning activities with their children on a daily basis and the opportunity to demonstrate skills that they have learned and which were successful in helping their children improve in reading achievement. Pre- and post-test scores for the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and the tests of achievement and proficiency and an improvement in the first and fourth marking period grades in reading were both used to determine academic growth.

As a result of the PATT program, 25 of 27 students (92%) gained three months or more growth in reading comprehension during the year of the program; 16 of the 27 students (59%) for whom there were scores in both years gained more than a year. Of the 34 students, 22 (64%) had higher grades in the fourth quarter than in the first, ten had the same grade in reading and two declined. Thus 92% of those who changed made an improvement. The program has been expanded to seven ESEA Chapter 1 Schools.

It is hoped that PATT could provide a model for parent training in school districts across the nation. The program configuration can be adapted to fit the specific needs of any school district or setting. The only necessary ingredient is the collaboration, cooperation and effective communication between home and school. ■

PRESENTERS

Kimberly Muhammad, ESEA Chapter 1 Administrator for the ESEA Chapter 1 Parent Resource Service Center, Chicago Public Schools, is a former teacher and educational consultant.

Bobbie Green is citywide chairperson for the ESEA Chapter 1 Parent Advisory Council and National Board Member for the National Coalition of Title I/Chapter 1 Parents. Mrs. Green is a parent advocate for Chicago Public Schools.

Both Mrs. Muhammad and Mrs. Green have provided years of dedicated service to underprivileged children, conducted a number of workshops and given keynote addresses and motivational speeches.

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There is a parable which I think about regarding what I have tried to do in my career and it goes like this: "One day, at dawn, a young man strolled the beach picking up starfish and tossing them back into the water. Upon observing him, an old man approached and inquired as to what he was doing. The young man explained, "If the starfish are on the beach as the sun rises, they will all die." The old man replied, "You have an impossible task, there are miles and miles of beach and millions of starfish, how can you make a difference?" The young man looked at the starfish in his hand, tossed it into the water, and said, "It made a difference to that one."

- Don Davies

Building Partnerships: Families, Schools and Educational Talent Search Programs

Ron Muriera
AACE Educational Services

INTRODUCTION

AACE Educational Services is a community-based, Educational Talent Search TRIO program serving middle and high schools in the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD). Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, AACE's mission is to encourage and assist low-income youth ages 11 and older from diverse backgrounds who have the potential to be the first generation of their family to attend college. AACE has been in existence since 1979 and provides its educational services free of charge, operating on a non-discriminatory basis with equal treatment and access for all persons.

SUMMARY

Talent Search Programs are dedicated to identifying, encouraging and helping potentially talented students as early as possible. To participate in a Talent Search Program, students must have finished the fifth grade and be under 27 years old. The student must be a first-generation (potential) college student, i.e., neither of the student's parents may have received a four-year college degree. Many of the Talent Search projects in the nation place 75-90% of their high school seniors in postsecondary education. These programs are located in rural, urban and suburban communities.

Due to budget constraints and increased demands placed on counseling departments in middle and high schools, Talent Search programs have been able to offer supplemental support in the areas of academic advising, career guidance, financial aid availability, and course requirements for college admission. Talent Search counselors work with students and their parents, to encourage them to consider college, to make sure they are enrolled in college preparatory programs, and to assist them in completing admissions and financial aid applications.

Once families and schools are aware of the presence of a Talent Search program in their area, they can utilize fully the program's services in order to prepare their children for higher education.

Talent Search programs are found nationwide. The strongest recommendation that can be made is for families and schools to understand the importance of establishing a strong relationship with a Talent Search Program.

PRESENTER

Ron Muriera is an educator, performing artist and advocate for families and children in the Bay Area. He currently is a program coordinator with AACE Educational Services.

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The beauty of family involvement is that it really is not an exclusive, selective undertaking. Every parent can be a good parent and every parent can learn the fundamentals and habits and skills of reading to a child regularly. We know that reading aloud is the most profoundly influential thing you can do to make sure that your child grows up to be a good reader and a good student. We cannot expect only the parent to change and to learn, we must also expect the schools to change and to learn and to open up to parents in ways they have not before.
- Madeleine May Kunin

Learning to Read the World: Critical Thinking and Gender Equity

Aspasia Nea
Alameda County
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INTRODUCTION

The objective of this presentation was to help participants create personal guidelines for examining the visual symbols of culture to gain a better awareness of the negative messages today's young women receive about their ability to succeed.

SUMMARY

Noting that the majority of workers entering the job market by the turn of the century will be women or minorities, American Association of University Women officials say that the inequities evidenced in their study of the bias girls face from preschool through high school must be reversed if the United States is to be competitive in global markets. "Construction of the glass ceiling begins not in the executive suite but in the classroom," Alice McKee, president of the AAUW Educational Foundation, said of women's difficulties in rising to key leadership positions in business, the professions and academia. (Merl, 1992) "By failing to show women in strong, courageous roles, schools reinforce that whole stereotype about how women are afraid, how they don't take action in their lives. Then they live it out." (Murphy, 1994)

In attempting to provide strong female images, this presentation first asks participants to establish their own criteria for what are visual environments which empower. This is achieved by personal visualization of experiences from their own lives. With this contextual framework, they viewed a slide presentation which offers an historical, cross-cultural perspective on visual expressions of female power. The art images presented are taken from around the world and are organized chronologically from around 4000 BC to the present. Thereafter, participants were invited to look at images from modern media and discuss whether they affirm the nurturing aspects of all life and destroy the stereotypes of the powerless female.

This presentation can be adapted for audiences of adults or younger people regardless of ethnic affiliation or knowledge of art and art history. At the conference, the presentation was made in English with some Spanish interpretation for those who were native Spanish speakers. It could be offered in any language.

The important personal insights that occur during the presentation arise from the understanding, now corroborated by socio-anthropologists, that there have been times in human history when female power was exalted and women were able to provide leadership and also express their abilities to nurture. There have also been times when females, and males who supported them, were persecuted in large numbers and we have thus internalized fear and feelings of inadequacy. This realization is arrived at in our day by our being open to the universal symbolism which the images portray. This visual openness and sensitivity then becomes the tool for looking at our present world with a greater understanding of the possibilities and the stumbling blocks which face our young people, particularly the girls.

When this topic was originally presented as a prize-winning Social Studies Curriculum in high school, the response from female students was astoundingly enthusiastic. The feeling of empowerment was very exciting to them. "People live in direct relation to the heroes and sheroes they have." (Angelou, 1994) When the presentation is offered to adults, the reception is similar. In receiving external and objective affirmation that females have intact in themselves the wherewithal to be successful in what they choose to do, there is a sense of profound relief and celebration. Parents/teachers from all cultures receive this as important information. During the presentation at the conference, there were questions which were collectively discussed on how to work with one's children/students to provide the nurturing environments they need.

The presentation was created from 1) the presenter's own grappling with the obstacles to success and 2) a very thorough research into the symbols to be found in the art images from all four continents and for as far back as art can be found. The power which exists in the universality of the symbols and in the questions in the minds of all the participants makes this a very potent session which is, at the same time, non-threatening. This can be explained by the fact that the images are beautiful and also accepted by all members of the society as being important, having been generally considered sacred in ancient times. This familiarity lends them authority and the interpretation is irrefutable since the observer is free to make his/her own associations. It's definitely the case of the picture's being "worth a thousand words."

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Failing at Fairness: How America's Schools Cheat Girls, by Molly McGregor Murphy, National Women's History Project, Sonoma, California, 1994.

PRESENTER

Aspasia Nea is a doctoral candidate at the University of San Francisco with an emphasis in International Education. She has lived, worked and studied on all 5 continents, speaks English, French, Spanish, Greek and Afrikaans and holds degrees in Fine Arts and Education. She is currently a Foreign Languages Specialist with the Alameda County Office of Education and coordinates a Title VII project with one of several objectives being the recruitment and training of Spanish-speaking parents to participate in high school teaching teams in three school districts.

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We live on one planet, and we have to learn to get along on this planet.
It means learning, genuinely learning, how to live with one another, and to
share the resources equitably that this planet has for us.
- Eugene Rolfe

School-Based Collaboration With Families: Constructing Family-School-Agency Partnerships That Work

J. Brien O'Callaghan,
Gregory W. Little, Tricia Web
and Margaret H. Sullivan
Collaborative Solutions

INTRODUCTION

The presenters described and modeled the principles and practices of the School-Based Collaboration with Families model developed by J. Brien O'Callaghan, Ph.D. over the past eleven years for use by school professionals in schools.

SUMMARY

The goal of the model is the prevention or brief resolution of any and all student academic, behavioral, or psychological problems. The approach is utilized with children of all ages, educational levels, cultural backgrounds, and with any type of child home or school problem.

The model is school-based, i.e., the work is done primarily in school, not in an office or institutional setting to which problems are referred. Home visits occur occasionally, but the primary format involves bringing family and significant others into school.

The model is ecosystemic, not individual or intrapsychic, i.e. , the problem is viewed as a consequence of interactional, relationship factors in the child's ecosystem, not primarily from individual medical, neurological or cognitive factors within the individual child.

The model is collaborative, i.e., the solution is sought through cooperative efforts between and among the major stakeholders in a child's life, the parents, the school professionals and various other players from family, school and community.

A major component of the model is the process of securing the motivation of parents and others present at "collaborative team interventions" to participate in a problem-solving format. Several important questions are asked of each participant:

- Do you agree there is a problem?
- How serious is it?
- Are you motivated to solve it? How motivated?
- What is the problem?
- What is the meaning of the problem?
- Are you willing to have a solution to the problem?
- Are you willing to honestly discuss the dynamics of family, school, and family-school interactions?

Children attend these sessions and are invited to participate.

Parents, teachers, and other caretakers of children are assisted in identifying parenting/caretaking styles on a "Universe of Parent and Child Behavior" which presents a grid depicting the use of control and protection by adults. Through this process, dysfunctional caretaking styles can be isolated, and recommendations for changes can be given.

The "School Decision Chart" is a flow chart for progressive involvement between home and school which describes a step-by-step format for the inclusion of increasing numbers of relevant players in the child's life.

Children's behavior is divided into categories of rights, privileges, and responsibilities, and participants in problem-solving are shown how to make them interdependent in the best interests of the child.

The model specifies clear and effective methods of child control.

The remainder of the workshop involved a description of the actual implementation of the model by two district-wide directors of pupil services from Connecticut school systems and by a Connecticut parent who had participated in a collaborative team intervention.

The School-Based Collaboration with Families model accomplishes what many other prevention and interventon models fail to do. It succeeds in getting all families to come to school during work hours to discuss child problems and home-school relationship problems. It engages parents and others in an honest and open discussion of real issues in the home, school and community that are the primary causes of the child's home and school problems; i.e., the way that adults are raising children and the causes of adult mismanagement, e.g., parenting confusion and conflict, marital problems, teacher and school confusion or conflict or home-school conflict.

It brings together everyone, as needed, to solve a child's problem, including the teacher(s), and doesn't leave the task to so-called "experts," e.g., evaluators, medical and neurological specialists, child study centers and institutions and individual child therapists in and outside of school. It arranges for central administration adoption of a district-wide commitment to child success, regardless of the difficulty of the problem.

Those interested in pursuing further work on this model should write or call the presenters of this Institute for referral to additional reading or customized advice on specific questions.

Participant comments, questions and reactions centered around several issues:

(1) The difficulty of making staff available during school time for meetings which could take from 2-4 hours. (2) The difficulty of securing building level and central administration support for a controversial model. (3) Whether it was really the prerogative of the school to ask personal questions about the home life of parents and whether such questioning might produce more resistance and law suits. (4) How much of the family-school interactions could be handled by regular teachers, as opposed to school mental health or other specialists?

Presenters attempted to provide more specific coverage of each of these issues, e.g., methods by which regular teachers can ask questions about personal family issues. No parent has yet sued over the use of this model.

As educators and other professionals search for effective models of family involvement and family-school partnership, it is important to identify models that actually work. The present model has been field tested for eleven years, and is currently being extensively utilized, district-wide, in four Connecticut systems. A reference list of educators of all disciplines in these systems is available to those interested in personal conversations with real people who have used this model.

PRESENTERS

J. Brien O'Callaghan, Ph.D., is a family psychologist and educator who specializes in establishing and supervising school-based collaborative programs. He consults with several Connecticut public school systems and has published several brief descriptions of this model and his book on the subject, School-Based Collaboration with Families: Constructing Family-School-Agency Partnerships That Work, was published in 1993 by Jossey-Bass, Inc., San Francisco.

Dr. Gregory W. Little is the Special Services Director for Simsbury Public Schools in Connecticut.

Tricia Webb is the Pupil Personnel Coordinator for Regional School District # 13 in Durham- Middlefield, Connecticut.

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A close partnership between parents and teachers is key to creating a climate at home and at school that is conducive to learning. The research merely reaffirms what all of us as educators have known intuitively for many years: that parent and family involvement, or especially the lack of it, makes a profound difference in a child's educational outcomes.
- Judith Heumann

Parents as Valued Customers: The Virginia Beach Parent Perception Survey

Laura R. Ostrander
Virginia Beach City Public Schools

INTRODUCTION

In 1993 teachers in the Virginia Beach, Virginia, public schools took a bold step: they asked parents what they thought about classroom practices. A questionnaire called The Parent Perception Survey was mailed to parents to ask, "How am I doing teaching your child?" This survey was part of the district's efforts to increase parent involvement, gauge customer satisfaction and guarantee continuous improvement. Results confirmed that participating parents appreciate and value the efforts of Virginia Beach teachers and that they like being asked their opinion. Fifty-two percent of the city's teaching force voluntarily participated in the project in 1994, and more than 68,000 surveys were distributed.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this survey was:

- To increase parental involvement in the schools by making parents more aware of the teaching-learning process.
- To help teachers become more sensitive to parents' perceptions of the classroom environment.
- To provide teachers with data for personal and professional self-improvement.
- To improve the educational experiences of children in the Virginia Beach City Public Schools.

The Parent Perception Survey provides parents with an opportunity to give perceptions about their child's teacher on 27 items dealing with the classroom environment, discipline, homework, grading, instruction, and communication. Space for written comments was also included. Participation by teachers is voluntary, and all results are confidential to the individual. Scoring and analysis are conducted by an external agency. The instrument was field tested during the 1992-93 school year by over 1,600 teachers. It was subsequently revised and used by a majority of Virginia Beach teachers (52%) during the spring of 1994.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Results were extremely positive for participating teachers and for the school division. Average responses were calculated for each of the 27 items on the survey, and an overall rating was determined from the average of the item means. The average overall rating for the total sample of teachers was 3.46 (out of a possible 4.0). Individual item means ranged from 3.0 to 3.6. The response rate was slightly above 40 percent; however, both the response rates and the teachers' ratings were lower in upper grade levels.

The comments about teachers were also overwhelmingly positive. Following are sample comments:

We have been very pleased with (Ms. A). My child looks forward to every day of class. I feel (Ms. A) gives each individual student her attention. The homework is in line with classroom instruction. (Ms. A) is kind and loved by her students. I always find her classroom to be inviting and fun, yet serious for the important tasks of second graders. (Parent of an Elementary School Student)

(Mr. B) is the only teacher at this school that has ever called me just to report GOOD things about my child. I really appreciate that! Most teachers only call for the negative things, or I never hear from them. (Parent of a Middle School Student)

My daughter has been inspired by (Ms. C). I have been delighted to witness my child's interest and enthusiasm in the assignments. I know this is a reflection of the competence and commitment that (Ms. C) brings to her job. (Parent of a High School Student)

The conclusion of the study is that the typical teacher in Virginia Beach is viewed as a caring, courteous individual, well respected by both parents and students. This perception is shared by parents of elementary school, middle school, and high school students. Furthermore, the vast majority of parents in this community appear to be quite positive about the experiences their children are having in the Virginia Beach schools, and they wish to be involved in and informed about their child's educational progress. The degree of involvement appears to wane as children progress from elementary to secondary schools, but the desire for communication from the child's teachers remains fairly constant across grade levels. Additionally, while the parents' actual knowledge about teachers' classroom performance is debatable, there can be little doubt that most parents believe they do possess such knowledge and that they welcome an opportunity to share their perceptions.

PRESENTER

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It's kind of nice to see that both Democrats and Republicans are with us. This is truly one of the most bi-partisan issues we have seen in a very long time. Well, you know what we know: parental involvement makes all the difference in a child's ability to succeed.
- Madeleine May Kunin

We're going to go through some rough times as we try to do things in a different way, as we try to open opportunity for all, as we try to commit to the American ideal which, frankly, we have never achieved, but at least we used to be working toward....If America doesn't get through this challenge of how to educate all the children, how to really commit to equity, how to deal with the risk of persistent poverty, America is going to lose its core.
- Angela Blackwell

Chaperon-Child Interactions During Museum Field Trips

Chris Parsons
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INTRODUCTION

When a school group visits a museum, zoo or aquarium, parent chaperons are the primary leaders. What happens when a parent chaperons a small group of elementary school students during an educational field trip? Does learning occur? What can classroom teachers and museum staff do to enhance the learning experience? To find the answers to these questions, Word Craft conducted a study of self-guided school groups at the Monterey Bay Aquarium, which partially funded the study.

SUMMARY

At the aquarium on any given weekday morning during the school year approximately 50-60% of the arriving students are scheduled to participate in a self-guided "tour," that is, they have registered to tour the aquarium led by their teachers and chaperons. They do not participate in a formal program led by an aquarium staff member. (This is not unusual; most museums, zoos and aquariums admit self-guided school groups.) And, like the Monterey Bay Aquarium, most places provide self-guided groups with rules of conduct, as well as pre- and post-visit materials.

When a teacher arrives with a group of 300 students, he or she divides the class into smaller groups (usually 4 to 6 students per group) and assigns a parent chaperon to escort that group. The chaperon assigned to a group is often a parent of one of the children in the group.

The goal of this study was to gather baseline data: Who are the parent chaperons? How are they prepared for their role? What happens while they are at the aquarium? Who leads the group: the chaperon or the students? Where do they go? What interactions take place? And, the big question: Does learning occur?

The study began in 1992 and was continued in 1994. We used two methods to gather data. First, we conducted a random telephone survey of teachers after they had visited the aquarium. We wanted to know how the teachers had selected and prepared their chaperons. We spoke to a total of 35 teachers (13 in 1992; 22 in 1994).

Second, we followed self-guided school groups during an aquarium visit. We randomly selected a school group (grades 3 to 5) from the list of those registered. We then called the teacher to ask permission to follow one of his/her chaperoned groups. Then, while the group was gathering at the aquarium's entrance, we randomly selected a chaperon and followed that self-guided group. We wanted to know what they did and to determine the quality of the educational experience. We managed to follow the entire "tour" of a total of 20 school groups (7 in 1992; 13 in 1994).

This study of parent-chaperoned elementary school students resulted in the following findings:

- Parent chaperons volunteer to see the aquarium and be with their children (according to teachers). Chaperons are parents; they interact with the students as children, not as students.
- Most teachers shared with their chaperons the aquarium-developed materials that were marked for chaperons, the aquarium's "Suggestions for Chaperons." Teachers also provided rules and logistical information.
- Although most teachers said they coached their chaperons on how to work with students in the aquarium, the coaching was in the form of logistics and rules, not on how to facilitate learning in the aquarium.
- In the aquarium, groups seemed to be led equally by chaperons and students, and they exchanged leadership roles throughout their visit.
- The dynamics between chaperons and students were generally positive and exploratory. Thinking and science process skills were very basic. The adult (be it parent chaperon or aquarium volunteer) answered questions, identified animals and provided basic content. There was generally no eliciting of conclusions based on observations, no discussion of the application of information and no discussion of values.
- Instead of furthering basic science skills (an aquarium goal), the groups were very much involved in social process skills. Although this wasn't what we anticipated, it was an encouraging sign. Social psychology holds that social interaction enhances learning (Litwak, 1992). Social groups, and family groups in particular, are the primary learning environment for humans (Falk & Dierking, 1992).

- Sight was the predominant sense used; touch was next, although there was no exploration of how things felt. The use of smell and hearing were not encouraged.
- Parent chaperons relied heavily on overhead identification signs at exhibits, rather than signs next to exhibits, and aquarium (volunteer) guides stationed at exhibits to answer questions about what the group was seeing. (Every group talked at least once with aquarium guides stationed at exhibits.) Some chaper ons responded to children's questions by just giving the names of the animals; others read the interpretive signs out loud verbatim or read and interpreted the information for the students.
- When worksheets were used, the children were task oriented, and the interaction between students and chaperons was greatly reduced (in some cases, nonexistent). Children with worksheets became students and the parent-children interactions decreased.
- Conversations focused on the animals in the aquarium. In some cases students seemed to understand that these were ocean animals, but no one (chaperons or aquarium guides) made reference to the relationship between the animals inside the aquarium and the bay outside the aquarium.

Parents are an important part of the field trip experience. We were pleasantly surprised at the positive interactions we observed while following parent-chaperoned school groups. We were also surprised, probably naively so, at how closely these self-guided groups resembled family groups. We had always considered them "traditional" education groups. However, they're not identical to family groups because of the similar ages of the children and lack of 'history" between most of the children and the parent chaperons (Taylor in Falk & Dierking, 1992). After listening to the groups' conversations, we found evidence that the groups were learning through social interactions as described in family group studies.

As educators we can help facilitate learning within parent-chaperoned groups by "responding to visitors' natural experiences" (Kom, 1994) and focusing on learning within the social group, instead of offering techniques, materials or kits that attempt to impose a more traditional education perspective of learning on groups in informal settings.

School groups' behavior and learning in a museum, zoo or aquarium is an extremely important issue to the staffs of these informal education institutions. My experience at the Families and Schools Conference was that this issue was not of interest to classroom teachers given the many issues they face each day. My question is: "How do we bridge the seemingly disparate points of view on this issue?"

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PRESENTER

Chris Parsons, the founder and owner/manager of Word Craft, holds a B.A. in biology, an M.A. in education, and is currently working on an M.B.A. She has worked in informal education since 1976. Chris was on the education staffs of Sea World of California, the Zoological Society of San Diego's Wild Animal Park and the Monterey Bay Aquarium during its start-up. Now, her business assists museums, zoos, aquariums and nature centers with the development and evaluation of education programs and exhibits.

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> *I have seen wonderful models of success with schools changing their ways, being flexible, being aware of different languages, having parent meetings at all kinds of hours, having home visits, using technology, all of that is accessible and all of that we can do.*
>
> *- Madeleine May Kunin*

Collaborative Family-School Conferencing: A Nondeficit Model

Judith V. Peyton
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INTRODUCTION

Collaborative Family-School Conferencing provides strategies for a parent (or other family member), child and educator to use to conference informally to share ideas or address concerns that may arise. The Collaborative Family-School Conferencing Model is based on the belief that there are similarities and differences in the family system and the school system, not deficits on one side or the other. The model is intended to be used in early childhood education classes (or daycare) through high school.

SUMMARY

Collaborative Family-School Conferencing can be used as a first step in building family-school partnerships or it can be used to maintain existing partnerships between families and educators. Use of this model does not mean adding to the existing responsibilities of the family or the educator. It means doing the same things they have been doing but doing them collaboratively by talking about them during conferencing. It is important that both the teacher and the parent want to collaborate because this is not an approach that should be forced on people. The transition to this kind of collaborative conferencing should take place in an atmosphere of school administrative support where the teacher is allowed some time and space to conference when a parent is available.

When a parent, educator and child are involved in a conference, all participants should be sensitive and accepting of one another's gender, ethnicity, culture and socioeconomic status. In addition, educators must be accepting of the different composition and structure of each family, as well as being sensitive to certain family circumstances, such as special stressful conditions, if they exist. The same accepting attitude should hold true for the family in their attitude toward the educator.

An outside facilitator, expert or consultant is not expected to be present during collaborative conferencing. This approach grew out of action research in the classroom as a result of this writer's attempt to include the child and the family in finding solutions for the kinds of exigencies that crop up continually. It is much easier to call the parent immediately, to conference over the phone, to invite him or her to come into the classroom to observe and to conference when the child can be there, or to set up a time for a home visit than it is to find the school social worker or school psychologist, explain the situation to them and secure their help at a propitious time.

Strategies from this Collaborative Family-School Conferencing Model can be used by both parent and teacher as they are needed. If the teacher has been trained in the model, then he or she can give a general explanation to the parent and child to make the process workable. It would be ideal to train administrators, teachers, support staff (especially school secretaries who interact often with families), parents (or other representatives of the child, like foster parents or guardians) and children (depending on their age), in collaborative conferencing strategies. Everyone needs to know that collaborative conferencing starts with a positive mindset based on the belief that more acceptable solutions to differences between family systems and school systems can be found when all people involved are working collaboratively and building on each other's strengths, not focusing on their deficits.

When we who are parents or educators read or hear, "Work with each other to make a plan or solve a problem that will support the growth of the child you share," the question in most of our minds is, "How do we do that?" Few parents and few educators have been trained to conference collaboratively to create a plan that both can support. Collaborative family-school conferencing is not expected to be a step-by-step recipe. Most of the training is aimed at teaching concrete strategies that can be used by both the parent and the teacher, like reframing, using video-talk, using presuppositional language and other solution-oriented strategies that attempt to change the viewing and/or the doing of what has been happening More traditional problem solving strategies like agreeing on the problem, setting goals and follow-up conferencing are also part of this process. These strategies are grounded in what is happening in the present and they create possibilities for the future. A change in a participant's perceptions (the viewing), or a small change in a participant's actions (the doing), can cause a ripple effect on the relationships that may create new solutions. These strategies do not attempt to dig into the past or to change what cannot be changed. They give the parent, the child and the teacher something to try when faced with, "What do we do now?"

informal good news conferencing and a sharing-of-ideas conferencing are very likely to happen when this approach is being used. In the past, conferences were attended by just the parent and the teacher, and although the teacher would do most of the talking, sometimes both of them would talk about what was wrong with the child. There would be little talk related to looking at the situation differently or doing something different to change the situation. There would be no recognition that the teacher and the parent were part of the problem, too. Having the child present at the conference (if the parent agrees) keeps the conference honest and prevents a negative snowballing effect. Everyone recognizes that they are part of the problem and part of the solution.

Participants in the Families and Schools Conference session on Collaborative Family-School Conferencing had some very helpful suggestions on other ways to use reframing in conferencing. They also commented that they had not seen a model like this one that was aimed at educators and families. For further understanding, people should study the theories and strategies of brief therapy, solution-oriented therapy and conflict negotiation, and get training in them when possible. Collaborative Family-School Conferencing is very similar to the solution-oriented family-school meeting approach, but that approach is set up to be facilitated by a school psychologist or other expert and the training is not intended for educators or families, although it would be very helpful for people to study and to try to understand this approach.

The sticking point that may prevent collaborative conferencing from happening in schools will be teachers' refusal to use it. One suggestion that occurs to this writer after listening to a discussion on action research in one of the Families and School Conference sessions, would be for educational researchers to encourage teachers to get involved in action research on collaborative conferencing.

In "'Preparing Teachers for Parent Involvement," Daniel Safran wrote, "It is essential for teachers who work with parents to have a value orientation which is non-elitist and which accepts and respects the parents and community of the children they teach." This is the basic tenet of Collaborative Family-School Conferencing: A Nondeficit Model. The responsibility to resolve contradictions between the family and the school should not fall just on the shoulders of the children who go back and forth every day from one system to the other. More conferencing between families and schools is needed. During this conferencing process, family members, the educator and the child will discover their similarities and their common goals -and they will notice ways in which they are different. They can learn to conference collaboratively for everyone's benefit based on respect for these differences.

* * *

PRESENTER

Judith Peyton developed the Collaborative Family-School Conferencing: A Nondeficit Model as a result of five years of trial and error when she was conferencing with the families of her elementary school students and working on her doctoral dissertation research. Judith is an adjunct professor in early childhood education at Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin, the mother of four grown children and a doctoral candidate. She is writing her dissertation while enjoying hiking and skiing with her husband in the woods and along the shores of Lake Superior. She received the Ora Bretall Scholarship for doctoral dissertation research from Illinois State University in October 1994.

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Stay in touch with the people you meet here, find out what they are doing, find out what is working and find out what is not working -and why. Don't return to isolation, form your partnerships. Network and collaborate with one another on programs and projects. We all need to work together.
- Sue Ferguson

Our biggest challenge is to be able to replicate or multiply our success stories. It's no great mystery what makes a good school, or what the role of family involvement is. These are common sense ideas and we have absolutely no excuse not to multiply success.
- Madeleine May Kunin

Parent Involvement in Special Education: Why Wait Until the Year 2000?

Becky Raabe, Shirley Hilts-Scott
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The Parent Information Network (PIN)

INTRODUCTION

In 1988, in an effort to increase parent involvement in Arizona's schools, the Arizona Department of Education, Special Education Section (ADE/SES), formed a steering committee of volunteer parents called PALS (Parents Are Liaisons to Schools). In 1991 ADE/SES contracted with three parents who have children with special needs to facilitate the PALS project, develop the Parent Information Network Clearinghouse for dissemination of resource materials and further the state's commitment to promote family/school partnerships.

The three Parent Information Network (PIN) Specialists cover vast geographical areas, rural and metropolitan, and interact with a wide variety of cultures. Arizona's large Native American and Hispanic populations offer the Parent Information Network many opportunities to develop strategies to promote parent involvement in these hard-to-reach communities.

SUMMARY

Frequently, parents of children receiving special education services feel isolated and do not participate in school related activities. Through the Parent Information Network, which includes PALS (Parents Are Liaisons to Schools) and PINS (Parent Information Network Specialists), the Arizona Department of Education/Special Education Section (ADE/SES) is promoting parent involvement with schools which not only benefits student performance but also increases parent participation in the decisions regarding Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs).

PALS provide the ADE/SES with feedback on special education issues; give assistance and support to other PALS members; update local parents and special education directors regarding information the ADE/SES distributes, including legislation and funding; encourage parents to become aware of the legislative process as an avenue of change and network with their district special education director to develop action

plans; and, most importantly, work with their local districts to increase parent involvement at all levels.

PINS serve as liaisons between the PALS and parents from schools in their regions and the state. The PIN Specialists provide parents with requested information on relevant special education issues and serve as the "connection" between parents, the ADE/SES and districts. They relay information on various issues and training needs. In addition to being available as regional contacts for other parents, the PINS provide general assistance to local parents and school administrators; present lectures and workshops on parent involvement to college/university classes and at professional association conferences; assist in establishing or strengthening local parent support groups or special education advisory committees; and provide parents' rights and responsibilities training seminars in each of the counties of their assigned region.

Collaboration with existing parent groups, social service agencies and institutions of higher learning are key ways to bring about change, not only in philosophies but in reality. By providing needed services, support and training to parents, there is less isolation and more participation. The PINS have provided pre-service and in-service training from a parent perspective to both graduate and undergraduate students and teachers. The information has been non-threatening to the educators and soon-to-be-educators and has opened avenues of communication between school districts and parents. The increasing number of PACs (Parent Advisory Councils) being formed is testimony to the openness and acceptance of parents as vital allies.

An accepting philosophy and the promotion of parent involvement by the state department of education is an important component to the success of the PALS/PINS project. Such an understanding helps foster positive attitudes in school districts. Clear expectations need to be established by school districts at the time a meeting is set or invitations are extended to parents for participation in a PAC. Some initial ground rules need to be mutually agreed upon if the group is to become a dynamic entity capable of proactive change. Stating what the group is, as well as what it isn't, is important. The more a school or school district can open the lines of true communication the greater likelihood of the success of the group. Parent packets with basic information on special education; letter of welcome to the PAC, regulations, acronyms, glossary and a directory listing of support groups or parent organizations are all helpful tools for reaching out to parents and establishing a collaborative working environment.

PRESENTERS

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We have to make sure that corporate America does its share; we should not force parents to choose between being able to earn a decent living and being able to be decent parents.
- Madeleine May Kunin

As I sat here this evening and thought what a job description might be for this group so diverse as we are, it just struck me that our job is to make certain that C students don't run the world.
- Michael Stewart

Promising Parent Partnerships Through Empowerment

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INTRODUCTION

Promising Parent Partnerships Through Empowerment is a drop-out recovery model which employs a learning/personality inventory to create understanding between parents, students and the school. Ways to empower parents and students to take responsibility for understanding and working with the educational institution in order to ensure success is a part of the model presented at this conference. The Independent Learning Center, the drop-out recovery school used with this model, is located in Woodland, California and serves a population of highly at-risk youth. Although it is located in a rural setting, the model adapts itself to inner-city and suburban environments with equal success. The uniqueness of the program is its high academic standards, juxtaposed with an affective, holistic, student-centered approach, the cornerstone of which is self- esteem building. Demonstrations of how a person's self-esteem affects his or her capacity to succeed both in school and in life, along with practical classroom methods that stress the necessity for good communication skills which can empower individuals, are available to parents and students as well.

SUMMARY

The specific goals and objectives are to develop strategies to enhance self-esteem and to model self-esteem building techniques for parents, teachers and students. This promotes individual responsibility for personal and academic development, and increases awareness of the role high self-esteem plays in academic achievement and the student/school/parent connection.

Workshops are presented for parents and students which combine "True Colors" personality and learning styles information to predict and understand human behavior. These workshops are designed to cover such topics as the importance of self-esteem, the conditions which allow it to develop and techniques for improving it. The learning/personality styles information creates an understanding between parents, students and the school. By strengthening this relationship, the learning potential of students and parents is increased, and parents are involved in partnerships which empower them throughout the educational institution.

As we approach the 21st Century, the government, schools, communities and individuals throughout the country now recognize and acknowledge the importance of community and family involvement in the education of America's youth. Parents must feel they are empowered to actively involve themselves in their children's education. It is the responsibility of the education system to encourage and facilitate this interaction and create a "pro-parent" environment. This model helps to honor and encourage this possibility.

PRESENTER

Sandi Redenbach, a full-time classroom teacher for 23 years, is now the Director of Curriculum and Instruction in the Dixon Unified School District. She is the author of Self-Esteem: The Necessary Ingredient for Success and co-author of a book entitled Innovative Discipline: Managing Your Own Flight Plan. Sandi makes students, parents and teachers' well being the focal point of her professional life. She is a teacher and educational consultant who presents countless workshops throughout the United States. Her primary areas of expertise are behavior management, self-esteem, youth at-risk and innovative ways to create 21st Century learning communities. She was twice named Outstanding Educator.

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When I first got to the Department of Education, I asked lots of questions, and I still do. But one of the key questions is how do we know what children know, how do we measure the difference between successes and failures. There are few conclusive studies except in this one area: that some form of family involvement does, indeed, have a profound effect.
- Madeleine May Kunin

Astronomer/Teacher Partnerships and Family Star Nights

Jessica Richter
Project ASTRO
Astronomical Society
of the Pacific

INTRODUCTION

Project ASTRO is a two-year pilot project to link California teachers in grades 4-9 with visiting amateur and professional astronomers. Funded by the National Science Foundation, Project ASTRO trains astronomers to work with teachers and students as volunteers, assisting with classroom activities, curriculum development, and special projects. Forty-five California schools in diverse communities participate in the pilot, and 4,200 students have been touched by the project. The project is being coordinated and developed by the Astronomical Society of the Pacific, a scientific and educational membership organization located in San Francisco.

SUMMARY

In a number of Project ASTRO schools, teachers and astronomers had great success involving parents and families in science through family astronomy activities. These activities have included evening "star parties," kits and activities for families to do at home and, in one school, a community scale model of the solar system. Many of the participants found that Project ASTRO provided a positive reason to bring parents to school.

Outcomes of Project ASTRO will include a Project ASTRO How-To Manual to help teachers and astronomers create local partnerships and the Universe at Your Fingertips: A Resource Notebook for Teaching Astronomy with hands-on astronomy activities, including family activities. These materials will be available in Spring 1995 through the Astronomical Society of the Pacific educational catalogue. We are exploring expansion of the project to other states through local coalitions of science centers, astronomy and education institutions and community organizations. In the pilot, amateur astronomers played a key role in extending science learning to families. In most communities, amateur astronomy clubs do education outreach to schools and the community, and can be located through your local planetarium or science center. Graduate students at colleges and universities are also getting increasingly involved in K-12 education.

Participants at our informal roundtable included a Project ASTRO teacher and volunteer astronomer, a staff person from the Exploratorium science center and a state coordinator of programs for homeless people. We discussed the potential of working with science museums to involve families in science, and using astronomy to provide alternative evening activities for homeless families.

♣

PRESENTER

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You can see great disparities in your neighborhood, city, state, and country, and those same disparities exist around the world and we need to find a way to overcome them. Teaching and learning from one another is a big part of that.
- Eugene Rolfe

We can no longer tolerate backward attitudes and practices, negative, outmoded thinking, mismanagement of human and other resources. The work that all of you take on here will be a key element in helping disabled -and non-disabled- children from multicultural families achieve the independence that is rightfully theirs.
- Judith Heumann

Integration of Education and Human Services: Who's On First?

Barbara J. Riley
Word/School Liaison

INTRODUCTION

Missoula Montana's Family Housing Intervention Network (FHIN), a project of WORD (Women's Opportunity and Resource Development, Inc.) is the facilitator of a community-based effort to integrate human services into schools using the Family Resource Center model.

SUMMARY

Missoula County, a rural county in western Montana with an area the size of Delaware, has a population near 80,000. Missoula is at its center, housing 80% of the county's inhabitants. FHIN, funded with an HHS grant for Prevention of Homelessness, works with more than 35 community agencies as part of the At Risk Housing Collaborative. The school district, as a collaborative partner, began to work with FHIN staff to look at innovative strategies for supporting and strengthening families.

A pilot project was launched in fall 1993 at one local elementary school serving 265 children grades K-5 from approximately 190 families. The project's two goals, increased parent involvement and increased knowledge and use of community resources, required both school staff and human services professionals to interact and communicate more directly with families.

The presentation described challenges faced by a community organization functioning in an educational institution, especially with sometimes conflicting values and operational systems. Discussion focused on how administration, principals and front line staff (i.e., teachers) all have to be brought along and have varying degrees of "buy-in" depending on how the partnerships are developed. Collaboration, coordination, cooperation and coercion were discussed and defined.

As all of us look toward strengthening family-school relationships, it is important to define how those relationships have existed in our schools up to now, and how we in the family support movement hope to effect change in this most traditional of institutions. Resources from around the country were shared, specifically on the topics of integrated services, family resource centers and family-school partnerships. Although Montana is rural and almost devoid of any multi- culturalism other than our Native American population, our experiences are surprisingly similar to anywhere in the USA. Thus our unique perspective on this emerging field was validated and appreciated at this conference.

PRESENTER

Barbara Riley is the coordinator of two school-based Family Resource Centers in Missoula, and facilitates several other integrated-services projects for the school district and the Family Housing Intervention Network, primarily in the area of educational services to homeless children and youth. She has also directed a collaborative project on early childhood services assessment in her community.

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The real work that we have undertaken is to try to reweave the very fabric of society and the very fabric of the sense of family and a sense of community, and sometimes you have to do that by beginning with the simple things....What we must do at this point is to use our hands for the weaving process, so that we can take those strands that bind us together once again. And I think there is a hunger for that.
- Madeleine May Kunin

What if Parents Were Asking Questions? Training For Involving All Parents

Ana Rodriguez, Dan Rothstein
and Luz Santana
The Right Question Project, Inc.

INTRODUCTION

The Right Question Project, Inc. (RQP) has developed a strategy that enables parents to formulate their own questions and use them as a tool for becoming effectively involved in their children's education. RQP offers intensive training that will prepare parents, school staff and representatives of community organizations to lead workshops. The workshops are highly participatory and participants have the opportunity to:

- identify the right questions
- acquire new tools for supporting, monitoring and advocating for their children's education
- generate new knowledge about how to be effectively involved in their children's education

The strategy is effective for engaging all parents, regardless of literacy level or educational background. It is especially useful for engaging parents not reached by most parent involvement programs.

SUMMARY

What we planned: In this session participants experienced two basic activities.

- *Activity 1*: they formulated questions to answer the following: If the teacher is not teaching what my child should be learning, what can I do? and, If the teacher is teaching what my child should be learning, what else can I do?

After listing a number of questions, the participants prioritized the three most important questions. They then shared these questions with the group, explaining why they felt these were the most important questions to ask.

- *Activity 2:* they needed to identify the questions that would necessarily precede these two questions.

The list of questions posed can be found at the end of this summary.

The number of participants in the session exceeded our expectations and what the room could accommodate. We formed working groups with eight to ten people. The participants worked hard in formulating their questions and sharing among themselves stories or anecdotes to provide a background to their questions. Answering a question with more questions is not a familiar task. The facilitators provided assistance in helping the groups move toward formulating questions, listening to what each person had to contribute, and recording the questions.

The questions posed addressed two issues. The first was the case in which the teacher is teaching what the child is supposed to be learning, and the participant is challenged to identify how to support, monitor and advocate for their child and the teacher. In the second case (when the teacher is not teaching what the child is supposed to be learning), the participant is challenged to identify strategies to support, monitor and advocate for the child. In both cases the focus is on identifying strategies to support and enhance the relationship between the child and the teacher. This approach provides an opportunity for parents to analyze the importance of maintaining a partnership with their child's school community.

One participant was concerned about how to get more parents to come to the workshops. Another commented, "Getting people is not a problem. I will talk with other parents as we wait for our children outside the school. I would share with them the questions that we talk about in the workshops and say to them, "Would you like to learn how to ask these questions ? I like this method because it is simple, " she added after giving her suggestion of how to outreach to the other participants.

Participants' comments on the importance of asking such questions:

- For teachers to recognize that parents care.
- We need to recognize that parents are not coming to school.
- Asking question help us to stay on track and establish process routine.

Through asking questions participants can:

- Generate more knowledge.
- Develop critical thinking skills.
- Come away with concrete tools to better support, monitor and advocate.

This is not the solution, but is a fundamentally important step that is usually skipped over.

Three training options have been developed for groups interested in using the RQP strategy.

- *Partnerships*: this option focuses on learning how to design and facilitate the four basic workshops (including one year of support and technical assistance).
- *Alliance*: this option focuses on learning how to facilitate the four basic workshops, and includes six months of support and technical assistance.
- *Core*: this option focuses on learning to facilitate the four basic workshops, and includes two hours of support and technical assistance.

Following is a list of questions formulated by participants (questions are listed in order of priority):

"If the teacher is not teaching what my child should be learning, what else can I do?"

1. What can I do at home to support the teacher?
2. What are my child's interests?
3. What are the family activities that could support the teacher?
4. How can I affirm the teacher and what is being taught?
5. What resources do I know about in the community that could supplement the curriculum?
6. How could I volunteer in the classroom to add to the curriculum?
7. What enriching programs exist?

Questions that should precede the above listed questions (again, questions are listed in order of priority):

1. How do you know what the child should be learning?
2. How does a parent know the curriculum?
3. How do you know the teacher is not teaching what the child should be learning?
4. What does the parent think the child should be learning?
5. Do other parents have the same concerns?
6. What are the district's expectations regarding curriculum?
7. What does the child think about the teacher and what he/she is learning?

Questions generated by the Group Curriculum Committee:

What is the curriculum of the class?
Can we have a parent conference or PTA to discuss issues?
Can I make an appointment with the principal or Department Head?
Should I have a meeting with the teacher?
What are the teacher's qualifications?
What type of support does the teacher have?
Do any other parents have the same concerns?
What is the development process of selecting the curriculum?
Can I be part of this process?
How do you select educational materials?
What is the mission of the school?
Do you have a parent/guardian handbook regarding rights and responsibilities?
How can we work together to ensure the success of all our children?

Preceding Questions:

How can families support their children's education?
Is the community involved (agencies, business, clubs, public and private schools)?
What extra curricular activities are offered to our children, before school, after school and during weekends?
Are there universities involved with the schools?
How do you adapt this curriculum for children with disabilities?
What would you be teaching and how? What subject area makes you feel more passionate about your work?
How can we celebrate the achievements of our students?

- more participation in homework
- follow-up at home
- teacher-parent conference to discuss ways to further enhance curriculum? I don't have much education myself; can you give me some ideas of ways I can help out?

PRESENTERS

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How to Design a Grant for Building and Sustaining a Family-School Partnership

Kimberly T. Roncagli
Centerville City Schools

INTRODUCTION

CHATTER (Community, Home, and Teachers Together Educating Readers) is a family/school partnership in Centerville, Ohio. The Centerville School District is a suburban district outside the city of Dayton. The district serves approximately 8,000 students with the minority groups being 1% Asian and 4% Afro American.

SUMMARY

In the spring of 1994 twelve concerned adults representing families and teachers gathered one evening in a home to discuss shared successes, concerns and the possibilities of working together in an effective manner to enable (our) children to become the best readers and writers they could.

We concluded that meeting with a mission of creating innovative ways of working with emerging readers that includes developing effective parent education models. We also agreed that our children needed us to work together as partners.

Most of our meetings have taken place in the home of one of our members. Public awareness about our existence and our mission/goals has grown at an astounding rate. To this date we have made the local newspapers for a total of three articles and have had coverage on the local news twice. We have put together and held a community Workshop for Building Effective Reading Strategies at Home. Over 200 persons preregistered and close to 150 attended.

In conjunction with our public libraries, over 2,000 new books have been identified and purchased for emergent readers. These new books will be shelved in a new fashion according to parental requests. We are in the process of raising funds to make similar book purchases for 7 elementary schools.

CHATTER is organizing a focus group to actively pursue the implementation of Reading Specialists in 4 other elementary schools in the Centerville district.

Our next community workshop will cover topics most requested by families.

CHATTER is a true collaborative effort reflecting what is desperately needed in our rapidly changing society and educational system. We are breaking down barriers and striving to share and grow together in order that our children and community will flourish.

Success is inevitable when we perceive each other and our mission as invaluable to one another. We identified our own needs. Our goals and directions are also self-determined. Drawing upon one another's experiences, cultures, desires, frustrations and strengths, we are able to stand upon each other and make a difference.

The community response has been overwhelming and this support is evidence of the need for CHATTER and innovative ways of working as partners for the benefit of all. The overall reaction to CHATTER has been one of amazement at how a small group of people could accomplish so much in so little time. And to think, "we've only just begun."

PRESENTER

Kim Roncagli is a Reading Recovery/Chapter I Reading Specialist and has worked in public schools for eleven years. She presents seminars within her community as well as throughout the United States on ideas such as: How to Promote Problem Solving Skills, Effective Reading/Writing Strategies, and How Communities, Families, and Teachers can Work Together, and is putting together a series of video instructional tapes on the above topics.

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Families Together With Schools

Marilyn Rumelhart
Family Service Association

INTRODUCTION

Families Together (formerly known as Families and Schools Together or FAST), developed in 1988 by Dr. Lynn McDonald of Family Service America, is a proven method of achieving parental involvement in the schools. It is being carried out in over 200 elementary schools in 14 states and continues to grow. The program targets K-3 grade children, 90% of whom come from families with marginal incomes. Key features of this program include:

- Making home visits to invite families to participate
- Having a parent from the community on the project team
- Assuring ethnic and linguistic congruence of families and team members
- Transportation to meetings when needed
- Food at every meeting
- Childcare for parent respite during part of meeting
- Follow-up sessions

SUMMARY

In the Families Together With Schools Program, the parents of targeted youngsters are asked by a school representative to sign a release form enabling a community based home/school liaison (a non-parent, paid position) and a Families Together parent graduate (a paid position) to make a visit to their home. During this visit, they observe the child and the parent, provide at home learning materials and invite the whole family to voluntarily participate in a series of "training" sessions. These sessions are held weekly for eight weeks, with an average of 10 whole families participating. The family training curriculum was developed both to enhance the parent's abilities to support the child's educational development and to enhance the parents' personal, social and academic development.

After the families graduate from the eight weeks of structured sessions, there are monthly meetings for follow-up assistance. The graduated parents are eligible to participate in monthly multi-family meetings. A volunteer Parent Advisory Council made up of Families Together with

Schools graduates decides the content of these meetings and manages a small budget, with professional staff providing support.

Families Together with Schools has been evaluated to determine the impact on participating children's classroom performance as well as on parental involvement in school. In thirty Chapter I schools across Wisconsin, almost 400 children were assessed by both teachers and parents. In eight weeks, improvements of 20-25% were reported in home and classroom conduct, attention span, motor excess, aggressive behavior and self esteem. In addition, parents reported increased family closeness at home. They also showed statistically significant increases in attendance at parent-teacher conferences and school meetings.

In a three year follow-up of parents from seven of the 8-week groups, parents reported that 62% had attended follow-up monthly sessions, only 10% never attending and 11% had become leaders in their Parent Advisory Councils. They also reported an average of 2.2 new friends. Sixteen percent reported getting a full time job, and 40% reported getting further education. In addition, 16% received substance abuse treatment, and 27% received counseling for themselves or their children. Increases in church attendance (32%) and community center involvement (35%) were reported. Finally, 70% reported being much more or somewhat more involved in their child's schooling. Thirty-two percent reported becoming involved in PTOs.

Families Together with Schools has successfully involved parents from many diverse backgrounds, including: American Indian families, Spanish speaking families, African-American families, rural white families, middle class suburban families, and families of mixed ethnicity and social class. However, engaging disenfranchised impoverished parents in schools is a particularly serious challenge. Families Together has been tested, replicated and proven successful in meeting this challenge.

PRESENTER

(Lynn McDonald, Ph.D. is the developer of Families Together with Schools.) Dr. McDonald was represented at the Families and Schools Conference by Marilyn Rumelhart, Ph.D., President and CEO of the Family Service Association of Santa Clara Valley. This community based agency has its headquarters in San Jose, California and was the sponsor of the first Families Together with Schools program in California.

For information about Families Together with Schools and how it may be replicated contact:

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We know enough now, we know what works, we know that urban schools serving mostly poor children can establish very effective comprehensive programs of family community involvement which will produce better learning. We know that because they exist. It's time to stop talking about it and to get on with it.
- Don Davies

Some people express their anxiety and frustration with anger, some people by turning away or giving up. You have chosen to express your anxiety by taking positive steps, by your own generosity, by your affirmations of your optimism, and that, in my view, is the most generous act of all: to see a problem, or see something that is not happening and to try to make it happen; to go back to the old sense of community, the old sense of neighborliness. In the end, that's the only thing that holds us together. So I thank you for having that vision, and for giving of your time, your talent, your experience to help heal this nation.
- Madeleine May Kunin

Key Ingredients for a Successful Parent Involvement Program

Joseph Ryan
Quality Education Project

INTRODUCTION

It's no secret, and the evidence continues to grow, that when parents are involved in their child's education, their child's academic achievement and satisfaction with school increases. Quality Education Project's (QEP) program is based on the following assumptions:

- all parents love their children and want the best possible education for them
- parents will participate with the school when shown how to do so successfully, regardless of their level of education or ethnic background
- parents will support the school, no matter what their cultural, socioeconomic, language or educational background IF they feel accepted and respected
- a parent involvement program is only as successful as the parents and school leaders believe it can be, and to the extent that a specific plan, with support and materials, is implemented

SUMMARY

A comprehensive, parent involvement program is composed of these suggested ten key components:

- School - Family Pledge/Contract
- Annual "Welcome" Program for Families
- Weekly Folder/Planner
- Parent-Teacher-Student Conferences
- Monthly Teacher Communication
- Monthly Principal Communication
- Parent/Family Education Programs
- Community Outreach Program
- Parent /Child Home Activities
- Family Reading Program

Research continues to validate the impact of parent involvement on student performance, from pre-school through high school, across all socioeconomic lines. Among many findings, Joyce Epstein validates that

Head Start students (whose parents must be involved in their pre-school activities) do better than non-Head Start students throughout their entire educational career; Anne Henderson found a link between student performance and parents who develop strong connections with school and maintain a positive attitude and learning environment at home; Jim Traleese confirms that the impact of adults reading to/listening to a child read (daily) is greater reading gains; Reginald Clark found that it is not the socioeconomic status but the family organization, cohesiveness and interaction that positively influences a student's performance.

QEP extends the concept of parent involvement beyond the traditional role of parents serving on school committees, volunteering in the classroom, attending school functions, and holding bake sales. The program's impact is twofold:

For the parent: parent involvement encourages parent support and participation in their child's education at home, as well as at school, that directly and positively influences their student's achievement and satisfaction in school.

For the school: parent involvement is based on a pro-active stance towards parents. Schools plan and support ways parents can contribute to and be engaged successfully in their child's education at home and school.

Such a program takes 1-2 years to implement at the pre-school through 6th grade levels; 3-4 years to implement at the middle school through high school levels.

Each school's parent involvement plan:

- is designed and supported by a representative group of staff, students, parents and administration
- has goals, provides training and materials
- completes an annual evaluation

PRESENTER

Joseph Ryan has over 20 years experience as a former classroom teacher, administrator and organizational development specialist. He assists school districts in their parent involvement and restructuring programs.

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Planning for Home, School and Community Partnerships

Norma Saavedra and Beverly Tucker
Southwest Educational
Development Laboratory

INTRODUCTION

With funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement, the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) is currently involved in demonstration projects that promote effective home, school and community partnerships (HSCP) to address the needs of at-risk students, ages 0-8 and their families. Staff are providing intensive technical assistance to five demonstration sites in the Southwestern Region. SEDL's contribution is to facilitate a planning phase where HSC partners collaboratively identify specific health, education and social needs in their communities and develop an action plan to address those needs. The planning phase involves the following:

- Developing a shared vision among partners with clear goals and objectives.
- Developing an understanding of the partners' roles and responsibilities.
- Maintaining open and clear communication in a consistent manner.
- Exploring innovative ways for gathering appropriate support.
- Documenting the outcomes of the planning and implementation phases.

Two sites, El Paso County, Texas and West Memphis, Arkansas, have completed their second year of the planning phase. They are now developing internal leadership to carry the partnership into the implementation phase. The other three sites are in the first year of the planning phase: New Orleans, Louisiana; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and a state effort in New Mexico.

SUMMARY

The planning phase that SEDL staff facilitated allowed individual partnerships to lay the groundwork for building common ground among the diverse perspectives that home, school and community representatives bring to a partnership effort. With this approach, a diverse group explored comprehensively the needs of children and their families and served as resources in the design of a plan that could begin to address those needs. The partners were able to combine their expertise, knowledge and networks so that they could develop a clear picture of their roles and responsibilities in the partnership effort.

The emerging awareness about the opportunities for involvement was a strong factor in motivating partners to take leadership in the partnership's course of action. As a result, the partners representing home, school and community collaboratively set a vision, developed goals and objectives, and designed projects, activities, programs and events that aimed to accomplish their goals and objectives. Overall, the partnership efforts increased parental involvement in children's learning, increased their visibility in the community and increased the communication Between the families, the school and the community.

There were key factors that helped the staff work with the challenges encountered during the planning phase of the partnership development. One was the fact that we participated as "neutral facilitators." As neutral facilitators, we emphasized the importance of suspending traditional roles so that equal value could be given to each person's input and experience. We also developed a means by which the partners engaged in team-building, consensus-building and maintaining their focus on the needs of children and families in their communities.

Another factor that supported our work was the leadership that SEDL staff took in allowing time for the partners to develop new working relationships and to sense movement throughout the planning phase. It was challenging to keep the partners motivated in the development of a collaborative partnership because it was process oriented. There was a constant need to balance activities with the process and to reflect on the on-going progress of their work. SEDL staff took the lead in documenting the work, disseminating the information and maintaining ongoing communication with the partners.

A third important factor was the utilization of a self-appraisal method for reflecting on their partnership work. Sessions included time for partners to give feedback on partnership activities and encouraged an openness and directness in their exchange. This allowed them to validate their own work and to give more concrete definition to their vision. SEDL staff also took responsibility for responding to feedback that involved the need for additional technical assistance and resources.

PRESENTERS

Norma Saavedra, research associate at SEDL, has a Masters Degree in Education from the University of Houston with an emphasis in Curriculum and Instruction. She has over 15 years of experience in public school education and community work. Ms. Saavedra has worked as a secondary school teacher, a community college instructor, an education consultant and a parent training specialist. She is presently involved in facilitating the planning phase of home, school, and community collaborative partnership efforts that have formed to serve young at-risk children and their families.

Beverly Tucker, research associate at SEDL, has a Masters Degree in Guidance and Counseling from Eastern Michigan University and an undergraduate degree in Science with a secondary teaching certification. She has over 15 years of experience as an administrator in higher education with an emphasis on programs in the area of diversity and special populations. She has worked as a public school teacher, an administrator and an entrepreneur. She has a consulting business in career development, technical writing, and provides technical assistance in job-readiness skills for young adults. She is presently involved in facilitating the planning phase of home, school and community collaborative partnership efforts that have formed to serve young at-risk children and their families.

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> *This conference was very reaffirming for those of us who often feel isolated in the work we do. I think it is crucial to emphasize the partnership approach; successful change will only come about when we can see beyond the categories of teacher, student, parent and administrator to acknowledge our common humanity and the necessity of working together to ensure that our children can realize their potential. This conference was a necessary first step in building a network of support for a community-wide approach to education. We need to continue the effort and do so in a way that is always inclusive and not simply the start of a new "profession."*
>
> *- Conference Participant*

Building Partnership Between Family Systems and an Elementary School System

Margaret M. Sawin
Sycamore Elementary School

INTRODUCTION

An alternative title for this presentation could be, "Using a System's Perspective: Building Partnership between Families, as Systems, and an Elementary School, as a Social System." The approach uses system's theory in showing how one school is attempting to consider families as systems within the learning environment of the school.

SUMMARY

In 1991, Sycamore Elementary School of the Claremont, California Unified School District was awarded a five-year state grant for planning a School Restructuring Process. As a Family Life Educator, I was approached by the principal to attend the initial retreat which started the re- thinking and re-imaging of the school's mission. This retreat was preceded by an initial year of meetings and input from students, teachers, parents, staff and community members. The main thrust of the preliminary preparation was for Sycamore Elementary School to become a Community Learning Center; the vision statement read:

> *Our school will be our community; our community will be our school. We will become a Community Learning Center. Students and adults will learn in diverse settings, in diverse ways, and with diverse facilitators. The children and adults of our school and community are our greatest resources as we empower tomorrow's world citizens. (Davis, Eckhardt, Rus and Worland)*

As a leader in the Family Wellness movement for 20 years, I was interested in the inclusion of the family system as a major environment for learning. I am proposing a new paradigm for community-based learning with the family system as the foundation. This would mean a radical reconstruction for the educational/learning places of society. With systems thinking, "evolutionary guidance design" would be utilized. Bela Banathy, President of the International Systems Institute, has suggested such a concept in his article, "The Design of Evolutionary Guidance Systems."

> Today, at best, we ask families' support of and cooperation with the school. We do not assign to it *by design* the role of becoming a primary territory for learning and human development. Within the evolutionary perspective..., the family assumes responsibility for nurturing the full development of its members and its own learning and development, including the development of evolutionary competence...that will enable the family to direct its own evolution and shape its future. If we reconceptualize the educational function as described here, we shall talk about equal partnership between the family, the school and many other societal institutions that can become learning territories, and constitute the total ecological habitat of learning and human development. (Banathy, 1989)

Such a proposal would integrate various ages together to form small groups for support and community. This would help the family overcome its relative isolation, as well as the departmentalization of the family from work and the neighborhood. It would allow families to become pro-active in their value formation rather than be re-active to the power of the media. The family might become prevention-oriented, rather than today's norm of being pathology- oriented.

From my perspective, Sycamore School has utilized "evolutionary guidance design" in the way it carries out everyday school learning, particularly in the manner in which it has attempted to implement its restructuring process. It has continued its belief that learning is an active process. It has parents, children, teachers and sometimes community members a part of the curriculum design process. It is beginning to provide authentic connections with adults and community groups for learning about living. It has suggested a unified governance structure while attempting to keep channels open for parents and families to learn of "new and different ways" to do education. Much of this has been accomplished in the three school years of 1991-1992, 1992- 1993, and 1993-1994. (Cooper, Haley and Rus, 1994)

Numerous attempts have been made to include family learning at Sycamore. The first year there were several "Family Nights" so families might become acquainted with the task of working together to strengthen their own system. These were well-attended.

Then we attempted to have Family Clusters in two school years. This was more difficult to achieve. A Family Cluster is:

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a group of four or five family/household units which contract to meet together periodically over an extended period of time for shared educational experiences related to living in relationship within their families. A Cluster provides mutual support, training in skills which facilitate relational living and celebration of life and beliefs. (Sawin, A)

The theoretical foundations of the Family Cluster Model come from several fields: family systems; group processes and dynamics; growth potential/actualization; experiential learning; relational valuing/transpersonal psychology. (Sawin, A)

I developed this Model in 1970 and it has been used primarily in church systems, as that institution is the only one in society which has the complete family as a part of its membership. It has also been used with the military, mental health agencies, and schools. (Sawin, B) At Sycamore, it was difficult to recruit enough families, and the longest period they would commit themselves was to six sessions. I led both groups, and worked with male co-facilitators.

We also attempted to have parent meetings explaining family enrichment as well as family systems thinking. In an over-extended society, adults found it is difficult to give time to such experiences. Each time the planned learning events were interpreted to teachers; but they were over-extended also, particularly with the many facets of the grant, along with all which is required of teachers by the state, county and city systems of education.

Another activity which was introduced by its founder was "The Family Heartstorming Its Future." Dr. Tad Frantz is a faculty member at the California Family Study Center and had introduced this concept to her students. Since the family has few models in the post-modern era, it cannot look back but must create its own images of what it wants to become in the future. By so doing, it starts to become what its members image. This is "evolutionary guidance design" specifically for families. Two families were involved in this imaging process. (Frantz)

In the third year, teachers introduced the idea of having home activities for families to work on together. One classroom used familial activities in the classroom and one content-centered evening was held where families (or partial families) attended to learn more of math. The author also wrote several articles for the school newspaper which was sent home. It appeared these activities contributed little to the overall learning within families; rather they were appendages to the ongoing school program.

At the close of the school year 1993-1994, the author wrote a summary of the activities conducted thus far with the recommendation that the Family Component be re-thought or discontinued. The Steering Committee felt there was too much happening with the school component of the grant, so decided not to have an aggressive program as such but wait to see whether or not any teachers or parents wished to have a certain kind of family component. This also gave the author an opportunity to consider family learning within a school system which was undergoing vast changes in its in-house structure.

Following a systems approach, one starts with how the "stakeholders" see the educational needs and ways they might be implemented. Schools and teachers do not see their domain including families, although family systems highly influence the learning in the classroom. Some parents do not see their own need for growth and change, nor do they see this as part of the school task. Both school and families see the parenting role as one in conjunction with the school but do not see the "familying role" in that way. In family systems thinking, one sees the whole family involved-and not just one part, the parents. It appears a well-crafted program of understanding the "familying" part is necessary for some to see what this might mean. (Banathy, 1992)

Returning to Banathy's earlier quote, there needs to be another paradigm shift of re-interpreting the family's role in the equal partnership of teaching and educating. Even though this is reality in learning, it is not perceived in that way. Many still share in the myth of family privacy: "If we don't let people know our family situation, it will not be noticed." However, lacks in the family's ability to function do show up in the classroom, in the neighborhood and in future aspects of "familying." In disastrous situations, it shows up in court fees, police arrests and increased tax rates for all citizens.

In the past school year, Sycamore had hired a Marriage and Family Counselor for four hours a week to work with high-risk children. In order to really assist such children, one must work with the family system. It might be possible that a team approach could be used with such children, their families and the teacher. A pilot program carried out with one or two classrooms, including some therapy, intervention and educational prevention, may be another way to consider strengthening families.

If teachers wished such a pilot to emanate from their classrooms, they would need more exposure to how family systems work. If some monies were used for a week-end retreat setting, such a collection of families could spend undivided time in learning and growing. This would also help people to see the need for all aspects of family assistance-therapy, intervention, prevention and education—to strengthen the learning capabilities of family living. The school would be a prime recipient of this process.

In today's world, the school is a victim of blame for society's ills, as well as an expected remedy for many of society's needs. To my way of perceiving, it is the family which needs to be assisted in its vast task of assisting all members in their growth as they attempt to meet the demands of change and increased technology. This means all people, of every age, need to be included. The West has had such a strong emphasis on the individual that we have neglected the aspects of community and support. Our country has not had interest nor concern for families as units/systems. The United States has no advocacy for families; we have no cabinet post, no department of the family, no place where families can go for support and learning-until they break down with dysfunction and pain. At the point of illness and despair we attempt to offer some help. Many of the prime figures in the enrichment field have said that kind of action is too late. (Mace, 1983)

Working with parents is only a first step in that direction; we need to break out of the hierarchal model of considering parts only. If we helped people in families to strengthen their units by learning skills and becoming aware of how they can help themselves, we would be starting with a systems approach to learning for change. "The unit in human life with the most powerful dedication to growth is not the individual, or the work group, or the social group (such as schools), but the FAMILY." (Napier, 1978)

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PRESENTER

Margaret M. Sawin is a family systems educator in the area of Family Wellness. She developed The Family Cluster Model in 1970 and has worked extensively in many countries as a professor, trainer, consultant and lecturer. She holds a doctorate in human development and learning from The University of Maryland.

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> *I want a system where we will aggressively and collaboratively work to create a world in which all people, including disabled people, can obtain the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve the goals that children and adults set for themselves.*
> *- Judith Heumann*

The Other Side of the Equation: Teacher Involvement

Arlene Silverman and Sin Yee Poon
San Francisco School Volunteers
Parent Involvement Project

INTRODUCTION

The Parent Involvement Project of San Francisco School Volunteers is a four-year program which focuses on three areas: (1) activating parents to work with their children at home; (2) training teachers and parents on the importance of parent involvement; and (3) encouraging partnership activities between school and home, like volunteering, serving on school-site committees, etc. The goal of the project is to increase student achievement among students whose families may have to overcome barriers to traditional types of involvement—barriers which include language, culture, time, distance or economic circumstances. Approximately one-third of our families are Latino; one-third Asian; one-fifth African-American; with the remainder including a number of Filipino and newly arrived Russian immigrant families.

The project, which serves nine public elementary schools in San Francisco, focuses on kindergarten and first-grade families. It uses specially designed home activities which are translated into several languages to engage parents at home, and helps to sponsor scores of workshops for parents at the nine schools as well as frequent opportunities for teachers to plan and discuss issues of parent involvement. Three videos on the importance of parent involvement have been produced: two for parents (translated into Spanish and Cantonese) and one for teachers. The program has been evaluated by Organizational Data of Alameda, California.

The project is funded through a number of private corporate and foundation contributions, including AT&T, Pacific Telesis and the Koret Foundation. Should individuals want more information about PIP or about the material presented, we hope that they will contact us. We have a packet of materials which we would be glad to share. It should be emphasized, however, that formal funding for PIP will end in June of 1995. We are currently looking at new ways to approach the complex issues of families and schools, including a focus on the role of community- based organizations. We are also keenly aware of the need for more efforts at the middle school level and are investigating that avenue as well.

SUMMARY

The presenters concentrated primarily on the area of teacher attitudes and training, with reference to research and testimony regarding teachers' contributions-or lack thereof-to the success of parent involvement programs. Unless one has the buy-in and collaboration of school staff, at least initially, any parent involvement effort runs the risk of being confrontational rather than collaborative.

The workshop format was twofold: Arlene emphasized the history of the program and its successes and challenges, using the PIP model as a framework. For those who were interested, she showed a video toward the end of the presentation entitled "Building Partnerships" which demonstrates ways that teachers may organize and use parent volunteers in the classroom and other ways.

Sin Yee's segment dealt with an examination of attitudes. Only when teachers are aware of everyone's bias and their own reluctance to work with parents will they truly accept and encourage parent participation. Beginning with a list of parent stereotypes generated by teachers, the presentation focused on:

- Atmosphere must change and become more welcoming; teachers need to make their first parent contacts positive as well as learn how to deliver bad news when necessary.
- Negative attitudes often come from frustration and lack of success, a comprehensive strategy/model is needed to help teachers plan parent involvement programs.

Exploring Item 1 further, Sin Yee presented three different perspectives on ways California is restructuring schools and the role of parents (from California Tomorrow's The Unfinished Journey), as well as a reminder that parents and schools often do not view parent involvement in the same way. She summed up with the following suggestions for teachers to keep in mind:

- Often parents don't come to school because they don't see it as their role.
- Sometimes parents seem overly critical or wanting to tell teachers how to teach because past experiences and/or stereotypes tell them they need to assume the role of watchdog.

As a follow-up to Item 2, Joyce Epstein's six types of parent involvement were introduced. Sin Yee suggested asking teachers to list the problems they come across in their classrooms and then determine which type of parent involvement can help with each problem. This strategy helps schools focus on solutions to problems (be it poor grades or behavior problems) and which type of parent involvement it needs to work on.

The Parent Involvement Project depends heavily on teacher and administrator cooperation. It is important at the beginning to set up specific criteria for acceptance into the program and to interview teachers who will be impacted by such a program. While PIP basically worked with K- 2 teachers and parents, we realize that it is important to educate the entire staff at the outset about the program and the research surrounding parent involvement. We also found that the Joyce Epstein model, or a similar typology, helps staff focus on what areas they are most concerned about in their classrooms and which types of involvement will best help in those areas.

Involving parents and families in their children's education is a task that some teachers do naturally. Involving at-risk families in particular demands a great deal of patience, willingness to do outreach (i.e., phone calling, planning lessons so that non-English speaking parents can help) and, in some cases, restructuring an entire school to be an open, non-forbidding place.

PRESENTERS

Arlene Silverman, the program director, has been with PIP since it began in 1991. She's a former middle- and high-school teacher and has written many articles on educational issues.

Sin Yee Poon, project coordinator, is the mother of a pre-schooler. She brings to the program the perspective of a parent, a parent of color, and that of a first generation immigrant parent.

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Strengthening Advocacy and Program Efforts Through Electronic Networking

Jan Sola
HandsNet

INTRODUCTION

HandsNet, the nation's leading nonprofit human services communications network linking nearly 4,000 public interest and human service organizations across the United States, has launched an extensive Children, Youth and Families (CYF) Initiative to address the needs of communities, families and children.

SUMMARY

During the past two decades, we have witnessed a dramatic shift in the nature and dynamics of children's lives, with recent estimates indicating that 15 million of our nation's children live in poverty. We have also seen a proliferation of varied policy and program responses at federal, state and local levels. As a result, the education, early childhood, health and human services fields have become increasingly complex and specialized, as well as more compartmentalized and isolated, largely to the disservice of the children, youth and families they are designed to support.

In any city, for example, there are separate and distinct communities of programs and experts concerned with teen pregnancy, school leaving, youth recreation, children's mental health, parental involvement, early childhood education and many other related initiatives. To what extent do the individuals and organizations associated with these projects share information, approaches, management tools, lessons and concerns? To what extent do practitioners connect with local advocates, let alone with state and national trends or organizations that monitor policy developments? How well do state and federal representatives and intermediaries keep an open "window" into communities?

If effective programs and policies are to be developed to ameliorate the deteriorating conditions of children and families, they must be designed and guided by people who have had experience on the frontlines, and there must be opportunities for effective ways to share knowledge and lessons across fields and across sectors. Equally important, lessons from the field need to influence research and policy just as research and policy can effect change at the local levels.

Although not a panacea, new technologies can facilitate the sharing of these experiences and influence policies. They have become recognized as increasingly important tools in the arsenal of social change techniques.

The goal of this on-line network is to facilitate the creation of effective programmatic and policy responses and successful advocacy efforts aimed at encouraging the healthy development of children. HandsNet serves as a centralized communications mechanism for professionals and provides an arena for establishing and maintaining essential cross-sector exchanges and collaborative strategies within and between diverse fields. Because of HandsNet's rich and rapidly growing library of timely information and resources, members can be well informed and involved in the dialogue on children's issues.

Six broadly defined forums are now in place: Child Welfare, Comprehensive Strategies, Family Economic Security and Youth Development, Early Childhood, Hunger and Nutrition. Each forum provides timely news and policy analyses, technical assistance resources, funding notices and other information of importance, and offers extraordinary opportunities to enhance collaboration and community building across the various sectors. In addition, members have access to the ERIC/Urban Education forum, an area where ideas and information can be exchanged about urban education issues, and to the Daily Report Card, an executive briefing on the nation's education reform movement.

Forums are managed in partnership with leading, nationally recognized organizations in the field, such as the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, Chapin Hall Center for Children, Center for the Study of Social Policy, Center for Law and Social Policy, Food Research and Action Council, and the Center for Human Resources.

Interest and participation in the CYF Initiative is growing at a rapid pace. Hundreds of children's groups have joined the network in the past year alone, including the leading child advocacy group in every state as part of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT project. Such interest demonstrates the great need for these groups to stay connected to breaking news, information on innovative projects, updates on funding opportunities, as well as the chance to readily exchange ideas with other organizations on how to effect change for children, youth and families.

◆

PRESENTER

Jan Sola is HandsNet's Director of Program Development, where she directs the Children, Youth and Families Initiative. Dr. Sola joins HandsNet following 10 years of association with the YWCA of the USA as Director of Adolescent Services; she most recently served as Director of Program Services for YWCA. She brings to HandsNet a wealth of experience working with both community-based and national organizations on children, youth and women's issues.

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This conference was a wonderful opportunity to reinforce the importance of the teamwork of parents and schools. This was not just an opportunity to promote parental involvement, it was an opportunity to support the critical role of parents working with schools for their children and for the effectiveness of the school system.
- Conference Participant

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Parent Involvement in a High Risk School

Nancy L. Tarsi
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INTRODUCTION

The Cognitive Enrichment Program (COGNET) is one of fourteen experimental programs funded through the National Follow Through Project. COGNET is an Instructional Model designed to foster thinking skills in youngsters attending grades K-5. In addition to the students who are trained in thinking skills, COGNET offers training to both teachers and parents of the pupils served in the selected schools.

SUMMARY

The training constitutes a unique aspect of our program. This is because teachers historically operate in substandard and highly stressful conditions, and the parent population, many of whom dropped out of school themselves, have often experienced problematic relationships with formalized education.

School selection was based on socioeconomic status (SES); a minimum of 51% of the families attending COGNET schools live at or below the poverty level. The University of Tennessee functions as sponsor site to the COGNET Program. Three different school districts are served, with five schools in all being supervised by University of Tennessee/COGNET staff. Two school sites are located in the rural southeast, two are located in an urban setting in the southeast and one is situated on an Indian Reservation in the northwest United States. Integral to the Instructional Model is the right of each district to decide for itself how funds are to be allocated.

After 3-5 years of operation, we resolved to investigate the parent involvement that had been generated in each school to discover the similarities and differences across sites.

Increasingly, the literature shows the positive impact of parent involvement in schools. The COGNET model emphasizes the relationship between families and schools in identifying parents, teachers and students to receive the same conceptual training. The goal is for a school district to reflect the culture and values of the families that occupy the community, to work from a common framework that reflects an integration of scholarly work and community contribution. Our present affiliation with the federally funded National Follow Through Project has affected the school selection to date. Many other schools have availed themselves of COGNET trainers who are skilled in our application, implementation and evaluation studies. ❧

PRESENTER

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> *The conference was an excellent opportunity to hear of other accomplishments and enterprises. What was heard was both confirming and enlightening.*
> *- Conference Participant*

National Asian Family/ School/Partnership Project

Bouy Te
National Coalition
of Advocates for Students

INTRODUCTION

The first project that focuses specifically on Asian families at a national scale, the NCAS National Asian Family/School Partnership Project is a three-year project that started in September 1992. Funded by the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, the project has three main goals:
1) To expand the knowledge base on Asian family/school partnerships by identifying, developing and determining the effectiveness of specific school and community-based strategies, the context variables and the school structures that contribute to a strategy's success or failure.
2) To support the school success of Asian students in selected communities by providing training, networking assistance and other resources to schools with significant numbers of Asian students and to community based organizations which serve local Asian families. 3) To share strategies with various schools and community groups in communities where there is an interest in developing stronger ties between Asian parents, communities and public schools.

SUMMARY

This is the first Asian national network charged with helping to realize the vision of Asian parent/school/community partnerships. Anticipated project outcomes include: model state and local policies and altered school practices supportive of improved relationships between Asian parents, communities and public schools; effective dialogue concerning culturally-based assumptions that often discourage Asian parents from becoming more involved in schools; and expanded capacity of Asian parents and community-based organizations to advocate for an increased role in local schools.

Currently, the project is being implemented in six cities: Minneapolis, MN; Philadelphia, PA; Chicago, IL; Des Moines, IA; San Diego, CA; and Seattle, WA. The Asian groups that are involved in this project are Cambodian, Filipino, Hmong, Lao, Tai Dam and Vietnamese. Some project activities for the participating sites include parent meetings, advocacy workshops and dialogues with participating schools and community-based agencies to identify problems encountered by immigrant children in schools. Project staff also engage school staff in the process of identifying school-based barriers to full participation of Asian parents. The project will produce a final report with findings and recommendations to schools and communities which will be nationally disseminated by NCAS.

The National Coalition of Advocates for Students (NCAS) believes that all children are entitled to have parents, advocates and concerned educators involved in all decisions affecting their education. Research continues to demonstrate that the more parents/families are involved in their child's education, the higher achievement the child has. One of the unique features of the project is that we brought all key players (i.e., community leaders, parents, school officials and so on) together to conduct direct dialogue and plan/implement project activities. We also use Asian community-based organizations as main contact organizations. By doing that, we raise the level of comfort and trust among families.

This project is very important to Asian families and people who work with Asian populations in many respects. For instance, it 1) serves as an important bridge to get parents/families involved in school at all levels, 2) promotes and supports the success of Asian students in schools, 3) encourages more direct dialogue between home and schools by having support from local and national (NCAS) organizations, 4) increases the level of awareness among people who work with Asian students and families, 5) empowers parents with meaningful information such as their rights, availability of resources and promotion of self-esteem, and 6) provides training on key educational and social issues, with networking support from other Asian communities in the country.

All of the factors above help strengthen family and school relationships and foster the spirit of a true home/school collaboration. To educate children is a school and community responsibility and must be treated as such.

There was lots of concern in the audience regarding how to get help for the minority groups in their community. The participants wanted to find ways that would help ease the tension between groups. There are lots of misunderstandings due to language barriers, different cultures and backgrounds, histories and experiences. One participant said, "Language barrier has always been a difficulty," and when they tried to propose certain programs they had trouble translating to the people. Another person raised a question regarding conflict between the different groups and asked the project to help resolve the situation. A question was also raised as to how schools and other communities unfairly and disrespectfully treat Asian cultures. The questioner was frustrated with the lack of resources and attention for Asian families/student issues. ◆

PRESENTER

Bouy Te is the Director of the National Coalition of Advocates for Students (NCAS) National Asian Family/School Partnership Project, Boston, MA. Some of his work experiences include 8 years with the Minneapolis Public Schools as Parent Program Coordinator, Resource Teacher, Bilingual Teacher, Teacher on Special Assignment and Outreach Worker. He earned an M.A. degree in Public Administration from Hamline University, St. Paul, MN.

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The conference was a unique blend of education, parenting and human services professionals. The national and local speakers who presented at the general sessions were astounding in their background and understanding of this relatively new field of family-school-community partnerships.
- Conference Participant

Parenting in Turmoil: The Role of African Parents in Formal Education

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Psychology Department, Rhodes University
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INTRODUCTION

Parents are educators in the informal home environment. In most societies, this parenting is built on by different forms of formal education. In societies which are relatively stable, parents have the knowledge and experience to educate their children in preparation for the world beyond the home (Mead, 1978). However, in societies where there is rapid social change, such as is being experienced presently in South Africa, parents experience a lack of certainty about what to prepare their children for. What they learned as children from their own parents is no longer applicable to the rapidly changing environment into which their children have to move.

In South Africa, this process of rapid social change has taken on many forms and intensities. Apartheid policies forced African people into homelands, from which they had to migrate to find work. The home and family life of these people was dramatically transformed. Changes in education policies in the 1950's and 1960's with the emphasis on Africans becoming "drawers of water and hewers of wood" served to alienate parents from what their children were learning in the classroom. Parents could no longer guide children from their own experiences.

In the 1976 - 1990 period students led an intensive struggle against these education policies. It was perhaps this point which was decisive in the rejection of parents as "guides" into the world beyond school. Youth were frustrated and angry about their parents submissive and defeatist attitudes. As they took up the reins of the struggle against the authority and legitimacy of the schools, slowly and almost imperceptibly, the authority and legitimacy of the parents was undermined.

South Africa in the nineties faces this problem. Although the battle lines are not as sharply drawn as before, and there is a concerted effort to change education policies, the education environment is still affected by these dynamics. Formal education and the education struggle in South Africa, have challenged and attempted to redirect the role of parents as heads of families and as educators. It is these issues which form a critical base for the process of reconstructing and developing education in the emergent South African democracy.

A central finding in research conducted in one of South Africa's former independent homelands, Ciskei, has highlighted the belief in the adult (whether it be parent or teacher), as the primary source of knowledge in Xhosa culture. Attempts to democratise the education system have argued for equality between students, teachers and parents in Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA) structures. The PTSA needs to be seen in the context of the politics of South African education. It was not a neutral structure, but proposed as a more progressive and democratic alternative to the School Management Committees established by the government under the policy of Bantu Education. In this particular cultural context, the principle of equality in PTSAs is bound to create a cultural shock for parents, as well as teachers.

This presentation attempts to address with some of the following questions: What effect have the above-mentioned dynamics of the education struggle, and the democratising of education, had on these cultural beliefs? What is the role of the parent in formal education? Can parents assume the roles they are expected to play? What are the obstacles to assuming these roles? Are the present PTSA structures still necessary? If so, what is their role?

The presentation draws on research conducted in a deep rural area of the former Ciskei independent homeland in 1990-1992, and on work done through a non-governmental Organisation, the Agency of Community Organisation for Reconstruction and Development (ACORD) with parents in a small Eastern Cape town. It presents the views of parents on their role as educators in informal and formal education, and their views on the current debate on their involvement in education.

SUMMARY

Parenting in Xhosa culture: modes and goals of socialization: A central pillar of Xhosa culture is the adherence to a particular relationship between adult and child. This is maintained by the different status held by each. This belief in the distinct difference in "being" between childhood and adulthood has implications for the relationship between adult and child in that "the child can go to the mother, but the mother cannot go to the child". The adult is clearly perceived as the source and keeper of knowledge. The child's status is strictly that of a learner and recipient of knowledge. S/he is seen to "lack" knowledge and must therefore respond to the adult's instructions. This is borne out in a study of mediation processes used by rural African mothers and cräche teachers in completing a puzzle (Van der Riet, 1993; Wertsch, 1979). Socializing the child into a particular attitude or approach to life starts at a very early age, and has an overwhelming emphasis on obedience, discipline, and respect for ones' elders.

It is this belief system which provides the backdrop for the current debates in education. These views held by parents militates the role of parents in formal education, especially an education environment where the stakeholders are meant to be equal.

Challenges to the adult-child relationship: The conventional relationship between adult and child was, and is being, challenged by the broader processes of social change. On one level, this was change the parents could not control (apartheid policies, homeland systems and the separation of various racial groups), which brought an education system with which they were not familiar. On another level, there was change in the younger generations' attitude towards their elders, as a result of the former's active and initiating role in protesting all that was entrenched in the system. In taking the lead in the struggle against the status quo, children had usurped the role of the adult, and with it, its authority, if not its legitimacy as well. Thus the tension between adult and child was drawn even more tautly than before. One could almost say that this "tension" broke, leaving parents with no role to play. This is captured in the following statements by parents:

> *We cannot try to teach them our way because we are suppressed. We cannot teach them in the ways of today. We did not learn these things.*
>
> *When Western culture arrived in this world, that is where the trouble started. We neglected our norms and values, we accepted other nations' norms and values.*

This mentality is reinforced by the hegemony of knowledge which, as argued by Samoff, Metzler & Salie (1992), has an urban, Western bias. This serves to undermine the knowledge, skills and resources available in rural areas, and reproduces the condition of underdevelopment. It seems that exposure to external resources automatically leads to the devaluing of the resources, practices, beliefs and customs which exist in the local environment and within the parents' rich history and experience. This is erosion of, not only indigenous cultures from rural societies and communities, but human resources as well.

The effect of this is: the increasing alienation of the child from the home context; an undermining of the parent's belief in their ability to socialise their child; and their subsequent handing over of the responsibility for educating their children to the teacher within formal education. In this way, parental involvement in formal education, if it played a role at all, became further marginalised.

A central theme emerged during discussions with parents and students. There was a breakdown in, and perhaps a reversal of, the conventional relationship between adult and child. For parents, it had the consequence of the "disintegration of parent's dignity". As stated by one parent "we are listening from the child, we are given rights and responsibilities from the child". A contributing factor to this role reversal was that of the emergent culture, what one could call, "the culture of intolerance" where students, as one parent commented, "tend to force things so that even if we don't see things in the same way, they have decided. They don't accept advice".

The vulnerability of the parents' position, and their blatant fear, is exposed in the image posited by parents of education "hanging with a string in the cliff" where, in meetings with students, parents are afraid to speak. In short, the situation has almost completely disempowered parents in relation to their children.

In reaction to this, parents have suggested that students be removed from the PTSA structures. It is this that the students have inevitably reacted most strongly against. It must be acknowledged that the parents' fears could also be attributed to the fact that information is power. The introduction of this "more democratic" structure has lead to the sharing of information, and thus the diminishing of the power of each participant. This goes against the relationship between adult and child and knowledge embedded in Xhosa culture.

However, parents have also warned of the damage caused by the fight against the status quo, and highlighted the need to recognize a collective victory. One parent comments:

> *I am one of those who commended students during the years of struggle. They opened some doors and closed others through their bravery! But they have also turned against the school.*
>
> *The victory is the product of collective skills and techniques. The struggle came about through every one of us, equally. The victory was not brought about by children alone.*

Parenting in Turmoil: Lessons to be learned from the work of the Agency of the Community Organisation for Reconstruction and Development: ACORD's central thrust is that in order for change in the form of development to occur, there is a need to create environments which are "enablement-friendly" (ACORD, 1992). Thus, the process with parents attempted to address the marginalisation of parents within formal education through creating a platform on which issues could be debated and discussed. The intent was to reaffirm the ability of parents to play a role in formal education by legitimizing their knowledge and experience as educators.

Despite the extreme positions held by parents and students, one can also discern the tentative involvement by parents in the schools, through the beginning of meaningful dialogue between parents, students and teachers, out of which a new vision can emerge. This "engagement" with the issue, primarily through the intervention of an outside agent (ACORD), is a critical instance, for it can lead potentially to empowerment or disempowerment (Nkwinti & Van der Riet, 1994). The creativity of this engagement is encapsulated in the colourful image, which emerged in the debates between parents and students, of a three-legged cooking pot. The debate about participation within the PTSA draws on this analogy in the sense of who constitutes the three legs of the pot, and who, or what is the matter being cooked inside. Students resist being the matter, whilst parents resist the equality of the three legs. The student's main fears are of isolation, misrepresentation and of remaining in the (sometimes negative) adult-child relationship.

Parents have also recognised the need for a new vision, and made proposals of their own. In doing this, they have laid the challenge at the feet of the students, as well as their own. They have acknowledged that parents still have a vital role to play; they must take responsibility again, because, in their words, "you cannot expect your child to be trained by the teacher. S/he will be like a goose which swims through the dam and shakes itself dry on the other side."

Another thread running strongly through this dialogue, is the appeal for the restoration of respect within the culture of ubuntu, on the part of all stakeholders, "we should show respect so that we can also be respected by our children". The term *ubuntu* is a Xhosa term for the ultimate test of good socialization. The human being (*umntu*) is regarded as a supreme "thing". *Ubuntu* embodies this supremacy of the human being. It is the teaching of how to be a "person amongst other people...." It is important to realize that it is not merely a disciplining tool, but a teaching of the quality of "humanness." Many would argue that *ubuntu* captures the essence of Xhosa culture. It is argued that if there is a return to this value, positive change can, and will, occur.

South Africa is at a crucial point in its development. The strategies and techniques used to bring about reconstruction need to consider, firstly, the devastating effect of Apartheid on the individual's life. More importantly, the challenges to authority have seriously undermined the socio-cultural norms of behaving within particular cultures. The adult-child relationship in African life is an example. As the stakeholders in education in South Africa now are realising, the process of reconstruction involves an assessment of the values of past cultures, compromises, and the incorporation of these into the reconstruction of the intricate web of social and cultural life. We cannot accept that no changes will take place. We cannot necessarily return to past ways. New approaches need to build on the roots that are strong, so that new growth can flourish.

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PRESENTER

Mary van der Riet lectures in the Psychology Department at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa. She has worked for an NGO (ACORD) which had developed a programme for rebuilding a culture of learning and teaching in South African schools. It is this work, plus her work with rural preschool mothers and teachers undertaken during her MA programme that contributes to this discussion on the role of African parents in education. Her belief in the importance of drawing on local knowledge, of respecting people's lived experience, and in the desire to grapple with the potential of South Africa's development have inspired her in this work.

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Crosstalk: The Public, The Experts and Education

Deborah Wadsworth
Public Agenda Foundation

[Editors' note: The following article, published in Education Week, November 30, 1994 was provided by Deborah Wadsworth in lieu of a summary of her presentation. It has been edited to conform with space limitations of the *Proceedings*.]

Bridging the Divide: What the Public is Telling Educators Could Help Resuscitate School Reform

These are not the best of times for educators or education reformers. Educators are frustrated by an apparent paucity of understanding and support, as evidenced by rising criticisms and a wave of failing referendums. Reformers see their grand designs unraveling in communities from Colorado to Connecticut as parents and taxpayers join more traditional advocates of the status quo.

It's a particularly good time, therefore, to stand back and re-examine goals and strategies. We at the Public Agenda Foundation in New York City have very current information on how Americans feel about education reform, information we believe is essential to resuscitating reform that otherwise may be drowning.

Founded in 1975 by Cyrus Vance and Daniel Yankelovich as a nonprofit and nonpartisan organization to study such issues, Public Agenda has for the past half-dozen years built a reputation on interpreting the nuances and subtleties of public opinion on the issue of education reform. In so doing we have identified misperceptions and highlighted discontinuities between the public's agenda and that of reform leaders.

Reviewing the situation recently, we realized that despite all our previous intensive research with multiple constituencies across the nation, we still had fundamental questions. Why, we asked, is there so much opposition to reform, not only from educators who might feel threatened but also from parents? And why is there so little support from the citizenry at large? Why are referendums and legislative initiatives going down in flames, often ignited by a bizarre coalition of left-leaning advocates of "political correctness" and right-leaning adherents of "values?"

Convinced there was more to learn, in the summer of 1994 we conducted focus groups in Birmingham, Philadelphia, Minneapolis and Des Moines, along with a national, random-sample survey of 1,100 Americans. We included an oversampling of parents with children in school, African-American parents and parents identified as traditional Christians. The resulting report, released in early October and reported in Education Week (Oct. 12), was entitled, FIRST THINGS FIRST: WHAT AMERICANS EXPECT FROM THEIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Analyzing that research, along with other recent Public Agenda studies in several individual states, we discovered something old and something new.

The "something old" was further evidence of what we had found in previous research: extraordinarily strong support among Americans for higher educational standards and expectations. They strongly favor clear guidelines on what children should learn and what teachers should teach. Eighty-seven percent believe students should not graduate from high school without writing and speaking English well, and seven in ten favor raising standards of promotion from grade school to junior high.

People believe that by asking more, you get more. They don't believe in passing kids from grade to grade, or in letting them graduate without evidence of achievement. They oppose giving "A's for effort."

We also found that African-American parents and traditional Christian parents share most of the same concerns about the public schools, and they support most of the same solutions. In fact, African-American parents are by any measure even more dissatisfied than others with their children's schools and more concerned that standards in their communities' schools are too low. They neither want nor expect the schools to make allowances for their children.

The "something new" we discovered may explain why this broad base of potential support has not been translated into positive public engagement, for we found fundamental differences between how educators and the public view the schools and school reform. Our conclusion: until the views of the public and of society's leaders, including educators, are better aligned, and until these groups start listening meaningfully to one another, progress is unlikely.

First, educators and the public hold fundamentally different views about how the schools are doing. Educators generally believe the schools are doing pretty well under the circumstances, while the public finds their local schools better than schools elsewhere, but nowhere near as good as they should be.

An indication of the gulf between these groups is exemplified by findings from a study Public Agenda conducted in Connecticut where 68% of the educators said they believe schools today are better than when they were in school, while just 16% of the public share that optimistic view.

The differences in how these groups analyze the problems are equally dramatic. Educators often perceive a breakdown of the social contract whereby each generation supports the education of the next, a breakdown they sometimes attribute to public complacency, taxpayer selfishness, and, in the case of inner cities, even to racism. They often see the solution in terms of more money, smaller classes, and extra help for students with various special needs.

Contrary to what many educators believe, the public values education as much as ever. It also strongly supports the goal of racial integration and believes that every child deserves an equal education. But it also believes—intensely—that while the schools haven't created today's problems, they are badly off-track in addressing them. People suspect that many of these problems have little to do with money, and that until they are addressed, more money will in fact be wasted.

But the disconnects aren't only between educators and the public; there are equally wide gaps between the public's priorities and the reform agenda. Such differences may well explain why the public's overwhelming support for higher standards has not translated into support for school reform.

We found three major reasons for this lack of support. One is that the public's chief concern about our schools—making them safe, orderly, and purposeful enough for learning to take place— is not being addressed by today's reform agenda or by today's reform leaders.

People see and read about schools in chaos—schools with little sense of order, respect, or discipline; schools where teachers appear to dress or act unprofessionally; schools in which discussions take place that people consider inappropriate for the classroom, and schools increasingly infested with drugs and violence.

How, people ask, can learning take place in such a disaster zone? And shouldn't this problem be fixed before any academic-reform agenda is tackled?...It's people's chief interest, and they fail to find it covered in most discussions of school reform.

The second public view that is threatening support for reform is captured in responses to the question, "Which student is more likely to succeed?" 61% of the public responded that the student from a stable and supportive family who goes to a poor school is more likely to succeed. Only 26% believe a good school can compensate for a troubled family. Moreover, 55% of the public say parents are doing a worse job than in the past. And if that's the case, some people reason, will it really do any good to pour more money into the schools or reform the curriculum? Americans across all racial and demographic categories support this concept.

The third factor at work is a strong suspicion among the public that reformers are promoting fuzzy and experimental teaching techniques at the expense of the basics. People believe that children should learn grammar and spelling before creative writing; that they should learn to add, subtract, multiply, and divide before depending on electronic devices to do it for them. And for most people, it doesn't seem cruel or wasteful for students to memorize the 50 state capitals and where they're located....

Public views on teaching techniques remain pretty traditional, and people are concerned about what they see as educational "fads." They tend to reject extremes of any kind; for example, they support neither corporal punishment nor the use of street language in teaching inner-city kids.

So when we talk about math reform, for example, we face a dichotomy. Over 80% of our math professionals favor the early use of calculators; only one in ten Americans agrees.

It's also worth adding that while teachers remain generally well-regarded, we found what seems to be some diminution of public support. We think that people's doubts grow out of a perceived lack of discipline and order in the classroom, and a perception that some teachers are more anxious to be pals with kids than to be role models. People cite good teachers and an orderly learning environment as the most important factors needed for children to learn. But 54% say teachers are doing only a "fair" or "poor" job dealing with discipline, while only 36% question teacher performance on academic matters.

The key issue, of course, is what to do with this information, which seems to me to be practical, commonsensical, non-ideological, and intellectually consistent.

In fact, whether we believe people are correct in their views is beside the point. These are strongly-held views by the people who pay the taxes, pass or defeat the referenda, and elect members of schools boards and state legislatures. If we want to improve our schools, we had better take their views into account.

Educators and education reformers need to consider at least three possible alternative responses. Any one of these choices, or a combination, could be appropriate in any particular situation.

One option is to decide that the public's concerns require genuine change in the leadership agenda. This might mean expanding the agenda to incorporate such items as safety and discipline and programs in parenting skills. It might mean a more overt emphasis on basics and possibly re- examining or delaying some of the more innovative teaching techniques until a successful foundation has been laid and the public is more receptive.

Another option is for leaders to determine—after an honest and candid soul-searching—that the public's views stem from serious misunderstanding about what is really taking place in the schools and to respond, therefore, with better, more effective communications that correct these misperceptions. That doesn't mean a new slogan or marginal repackaging; that approach has been tried in many communities and found wanting. It means real, thoughtful, and ongoing communication that acknowledges and addresses the public's concerns and priorities and explains clearly how schools are addressing them.

A third approach is for leaders to conclude that the public's point of view is in whole or in part mistaken, a conclusion that requires the exercise of true leadership—the slow, exacting process of building a constituency for ideas are worthwhile but not popular. This is the most difficult path but the only honest one if leaders conclude that their approach, and not the public's, is the one that will best held children and their families.

Is the public right or wrong? Perceptive or wrongheaded? Whatever one concludes, and whichever course of action is adopted, the public's perceptions should not be dismissed lightly.

Educators and reformers must listen to and respect what the public is saying. For change will not occur until the public becomes an equal and valued partner in the effort.

PRESENTER

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> *This was a most exciting conference. Parent involvement in education is the essential and often missing link in school reform. This conference presented a wealth of good ideas and wonderful resource people. The music and storytelling were inspirational. Angela Blackwell was right on!*
> *- Conference Participant*

Children and the Changing Family Study Program

Stan Weisner
University of California
Berkeley Extension

INTRODUCTION

As traditional family structures, workplace demands and the cultural and ethnic composition of our communities undergo significant change in California and across the nation, these shifts are having a major impact on our children and youth as well as on the capacity of the public, private and nonprofit institutions that serve their needs. As a result, professionals in the field need to continually update information and skills on how to work more effectively with both children and their families.

In California, the diversity of cultures and ethnic groups has expanded dramatically. By the end of this decade, there will be no majority ethnic group in our school system. The proportion of children from "traditional" two-parent families with a single wage-earner will be less that ten percent. In California, there will be over a quarter of a million grandparented children and well over one hundred thousand children in foster care.

While many children exhibit a great deal of resiliency in coping with these changes, most professionals in the children and families field have not had access to adequate training opportunities to keep up with new and more effective strategies for working in this changing environment. This paper describes briefly the basic framework of a new training program at UC Berkeley Extension developed to respond to these emerging training needs for a range of professionals working in the children and families field.

SUMMARY

The Children and the Changing Family Study Program offers a series of academic credit courses and workshops on topics in several critical areas: (a) the changing demographics and socio- economic status of children and families in California; (b) the network of services; (c) infant, child and adolescent development; (d) innovative strategies of intervention: (e) cultural and ethnic issues; (f) the nontraditional family; (g) careers options in the children and families field.

It is a part-time program with evening and weekend courses offered on the Berkeley campus as well as other convenient locations around the San Francisco Bay Area. A total of 105 hours are required to receive a Certificate of Completion. The cost of the program is under a thousand dollars, and it can be finished in less than one year.

Instructors and students in the Study Program come from a broad range of disciplines, including psychology, law, social work, education, public health and medicine. Courses and workshops are both research-based and action-oriented and are taught by a combination of academics and practitioners active in the field.

Although the courses do not emphasize any single approach or school of thought (social systems, psychodynamic or behavioral), an underlying principle of the program is the notion of family support and resiliency (Kagan and Weissbrod, 1994). At-risk children and their families are not "pathologized" but rather are viewed as having a variety of strengths with which to cope with the range of problems and issues facing their families, schools and communities.

Incentives for enrolling in this program vary across professions. Training needs among those in the children and families field also vary considerably. For teachers, the course on the network of services may assist them in their efforts to work more effectively with the increasing number of school-linked services. For those in the mental health field, courses that focus on different parenting issues facing grandparents, single parents, gay/lesbian parents, foster parents, etc. may increase the effectiveness of their psychosocial interventions. For police/probation officers, young adult and children's librarians, recreation directors, child care workers, and many other health professionals, developmental psychology courses may help them better understand their role in working with children at different ages and stages of development.

The challenge of meeting the training needs of this broad range of professionals is enormous. The declining status of children in California along a number of key indicators of social and economic health (e.g., obesity rates, percentage under poverty level, SAT scores, suicide/homicide rates, etc.) (Fuchs, 1990) makes it imperative that those working in the field are able to work as effectively as possible in this changing environment. It is also critical that professionals in the field learn to work and train together to maximize their various skills and talents.

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The conference was wonderful, well organized and very productive. It was wonderful to see many people still work hard to help students and families! It was also wonderful to be able to network and establish more friendships with participants from other parts of the country. As one of a few Asian presenters, I am very grateful that Asian issues were included in this important conference. I do hope that Asian issues/community will be given more attention and support, as they deserve. People at the conference seemed to be in a family-community spirit, and I do hope that this special spirit continues for a long time to come!
- Conference Participant

Family-School Partnership: A Building Block for Educational Success

Howard M. Weiss
Family School Collaboration Project
Ackerman Institute

INTRODUCTION

In this workshop, Dr. Weiss presented the Family-School Collaboration Project's model for creating genuinely collaborative climates for family-school interaction in schools. The program changes family-school relationships from those that are often alienated and adversarial, to those characterized by mutual trust, regular communication and cooperation in the interest of children. The program has been implemented in more than 100 New York City public schools over the last fourteen years.

SUMMARY

The most unique features of this model include: (a) Preventive and problem-solving strategies for establishing a general collaborative climate for family-school interaction: (b) Inclusion of the child in family-school interactions; (c) Strategies for achieving large scale organizational change in schools and across multiple schools in school districts; (d) An approach which impacts on each family's relationship to the teacher(s) and school; (e) Family-school collaborative activities embedded in the ongoing activities of school life; the focus is on how we do what we do; (f) Specific training programs for school staffs and parents: videotaped examples were shown to illustrate how parents, teachers and children are engaged in various climate building activities.

These examples included elementary and secondary school orientations, family-teacher meetings, family-school discussion forums, family-school problem-solving meetings and multicultural programs.

Restructuring the family-school relationship is essential for accomplishing meaningful school reform and enhanced opportunities for children's learning and growth. It also is important for refocusing our country on the importance of learning and collaborating as a focus for community building.

The Center for Family-School Collaboration offers training and consultation to schools and school districts interested in implementing our model. We are now in the process of pilot testing an extensive training manual designed to enable school staff to implement our approach on their own. We welcome inquiries and dialogue with colleagues interested in fostering collaborative relations between families and schools.

Participants in the session indicated that they were made quite hopeful about fundamentally restructuring family-school relationships by the extent of our work in New York City. They recognized the power of using activities already a part of the school calendar as vehicles for family-school collaboration. This approach makes establishing relationships with families a central aspect of teachers' work experience. Many participants were excited by the broad range of ways that we include elementary and secondary children in learning, planning, decision-making and problem-solving activities with parents and educators. These experiences become integral components of their school life. I appreciated that many participants recognized that change efforts were being made a multiple levels simultaneously: child, family, teacher-child, teacher-child-family, school and community.

PRESENTER

Dr. Howard M. Weiss is a social psychologist and marital-family therapist. He is the founder and director of the Center for Family-School Collaboration and the Director of Research and Clinical Projects at the Ackerman Institute for Family Therapy.

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The New Curricula and Parent Involvement in Sweden

Catharina Wettergren
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INTRODUCTION

The Swedish school system has undergone big changes in recent years. The major aim of these reforms has been to move the school's focus away from a relationship between state and municipal administration and toward a relationship between the school's professionals and the family.

The new curriculum which will take effect in the 1995/96 school year is a significant milestone in this change. It applies to all types of compulsory schools. The curriculum is based on a division of responsibility where the State determines the overall goals and guidelines for school activity with the municipalities being responsible for their implementation. The curriculum sets out the basic values of the school, its tasks and provides goals and guidelines for the school. School and home is one area where goals and guidelines have been specified.

SUMMARY

The principal is responsible for the development of structures for co-operation between the school and the home, and for providing parents with information on the goals of the school, its working methods and the range of choice that exists. The principal is also responsible for the contacts between the school and home in the event that the pupil experiences problems at school.

The curriculum is supplemented by syllabi for all subjects as well as a timetable, which indicates the minimum guaranteed time for which pupils are entitled to teacher-supervised instruction in various subjects. The whole idea with the curriculum, the syllabi and the timetable is to give a maximum of freedom for school, pupils and parents. According to Parliament and Government declarations parent involvement is essential if the quality of schooling is to be raised. With the new curriculum we have a good foundation.

I think implementing a new curriculum is in many ways as important as the decision. In Sweden information campaigns were directed to the municipalities, school principals, teacher trainers, education counsellors and teachers. A booklet about the new school was sent from the Ministry to all parents with children from 5 years of age up to 15.

PRESENTER

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This conference provided us with a unique occasion to share our program, and with a rare opportunity to network with parents and educators from around the country who are also committed to promoting parent involvement.
- Conference Participant

We have to stop thinking about families from the school perspective (and) get beyond thinking about families as just helping the schools when the schools need their help; ask the question: How can schools help families?
- Angela Blackwell

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren and Their Roles in the Children's Education

Renee Woodworth
American Association
of Retired Persons

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between grandparents and grandchildren is often a very special one. But for the growing number of grandparents who are primary caregivers to their grandchildren, this relationship can also be very challenging. Undertaking the full-time responsibility for raising a grandchild means major changes in the lives of grandparents.

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) has established the Grandparent Information Center to provide information and resources to help grandparents cope with their primary caregiving roles. The Center is working with national and community-based service agencies in the child care, aging, legal services and family service fields to address this rapidly emerging phenomenon.

This three-year project is made possible by a grant from The Brookdale Foundation Group. AARP plans to involve its nationwide network of field and state offices and volunteers, as well as its many programs, to focus attention on the issue of children-at-risk and their grandparent caregivers.

SUMMARY

It is estimated that 3.4 million children currently live in a household headed by a grandparent. For approximately one-third of these children (1.02 million), neither parent is present and the grandparent assumes the role of primary caregiver to her/his grandchildren and/or great-grandchildren. Census Bureau data indicate that grandparents as surrogate parents represent all socioeconomic levels and all ethnic groups.

Grandparents are raising their grandchildren because of:

- teenage pregnancy
- substance abuse
- death
- divorce
- parental joblessness or incarceration

- neglect
- child abuse
- abandonment
- AIDS

Grandparent caregivers may face legal and social problems. They may lack support and respite services, affordable housing and/or access to medical services and coverage of medical expenses. They may also have inadequate financial resources to provide care for their grandchildren. They may find themselves under extreme stress causing physical and mental health problems such as exhaustion and depression.

These problems are exacerbated by the demands of becoming a parent again, coupled with the more violent environment in which the present generation of children is coming of age. Special medical or learning needs of some of these children may put an additional financial and emotional strain on the family.

The AARP Grandparent Information Center, based in Washington, D.C., builds on the Brookdale Grandparent Caregiver Information Project of the University of California at Berkeley. In addition to continuing the gathering of information about programs, support groups, service interventions, research activities and resources available across the country, this expanded initiative includes:

- Grandparent Information Clearinghouse where grandparents, service providers and planners can obtain information, publications (including a newsletter) and referral to available national and local resources, including existing grandparent support groups and other organizations involved in grandparent caregiver issues;
- public awareness educational campaign about the special problems grandparents face as the primary caregivers to their grandchildren, including identification of legal, social, health and financial issues affecting grandparent caregivers;
- technical assistance to community-based grandparent groups and social service agencies working together to address the issues and unmet needs of grandparent caregivers locally; and
- the design of program models and service interventions that address the concerns and problems of grandparent caregivers.

PRESENTER

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Stay in touch with the people you meet here, find out what they are doing, find out what is working and find out what is not working -and why. Don't return to isolation, form your partnerships. Network and collaborate with one another on programs and projects. We all need to work together.
- Sue Ferguson

Our biggest challenge is to be able to replicate or multiply our success stories. It's no great mystery what makes a good school, or what the role of family involvement is. These are common sense ideas and we have absolutely no excuse not to multiply success.
- Madeleine May Kunin

Connections: Linking the Child and Family to the School and Community

Pat Wright, Kay Moberg
and Julie Miers
Fort Worth Independent
School District

INTRODUCTION

"Connections" is a three-pronged collaboration between the Fort Worth Independent School District, social services agencies and health caregivers aimed at addressing some of the needs facing today's families. Through this unique partnership, many of the needs of the young children and their families are being met in familiar and accessible locations: neighborhood schools.

SUMMARY

"Connections" means:

- An appropriate early education program, prekindergarten through grade two
- A Parents as Teachers program that supports new and expectant parents in early development of their children beginning at birth
- A staff development model designed to train early childhood teachers to meet unique needs of children and families
- A parent resource center at each school that includes parenting workshops and parenting materials for use in the home

Education services include:

- Learning center groupings
- Optional multiage classrooms combining children of different ages in one classroom
- Continual assessment of student progress using work portfolios, narrative reports and parent conferences
- On-site before-and after-school care

Education services to families may include:

- Expanded nutrition and parenting classes
- English as a Second Language and computer literacy classes
- Health education presentations including Lamaze childbirth classes in English and Spanish
- Adult Basic Education classes

Other school-based and school-linked services to families include some or all of the following:

- A full-time nurse and full-time counselor at each school
- Dental screening and treatment
- Psychological and/or pediatric evaluations and family therapy consultations
- A nurse practitioner or community worker
- Eyeglass frames and prescriptions
- A health clinic or a Teddy Bear Mobile Care Van at schools
- Organized social activities for students

Some schools have an on-site coordinator to help with health and social services provided by a United Way New Initiatives grant to the Child Study Center.

Parents must be involved in their child's education from birth. Parents are eager for information concerning their children and this need for relevant information does not diminish as the child gets older and begins school. Parents already participating in their child's educational outcomes who have already grown accustomed to being at school are more likely to continue their involvement when the child enters school. Parents see the schools as a family-centered location in the Connections Initiative.

Parent Resource Centers are available at schools for parents to check out a wide variety of parenting materials and appropriate books and toys for children. Group meetings are held monthly at the centers on topics of interest to parents. Parents and children come to the centers for "make it and take it" workshops and weekly drop in times for socialization and support. An Implementation Guide for Connections: An Early Childhood Initiative in the Fort Worth Independent School District is at the publisher. The guide includes background and history, goals, program component descriptions, guiding principles, implementation processes including needs assessments application and selection and accessing community resources. Chapters are included on program support, staff development and assessment, as well as bibliography, flow charts and "Questions Commonly Asked".

PRESENTERS

The presenters are involved in state-of-the-art projects across the nation, and sit on collaborative committees that are national, regional, state, and local; all have published.

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One of the things we want to do is to make certain that when our young people get to the fountain of knowledge, they don't just gargle at it but they drink very deeply from that fountain.
- Michael Stewart

The Families and Schools conference, by bringing together a wide range of people active in family involvement, provided outstanding opportunities for "piggybacking," building something new based on the ideas of others.
- Conference Participant

National Parent Information Network and Other Internet Resources for Parents

Larry Yates
ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education

INTRODUCTION

In this interactive presentation, three questions were addressed:

- What resources does the Internet offer parents and parenting educators?
- Why do you need those resources?
- How do you obtain those resources?

SUMMARY

Before answering those questions, we might try to define "Internet." The Internet is not so much an "information superhighway" (as it is described by T.V. reporters and politicians), as it is a mishmash of networks. These networks in turn consist of computers, telephone lines, space satellites and people who delight in creating mishmashes. This entanglement of shared resources has been a cheap way for people to communicate through electronic mail (e-mail) instantly and cheaply. The mishmash also contains information, junk and treasure, and the means for finding and retrieving it that are also shared.

What resources does the Internet offer parents and parenting educators? At this early stage, the resources are limited but valuable. First, it allows people to help each other easily through e-mail. For the price of a telephone call, you can exchange notes with a coordinator of a parent resource center in Tampa, for example, about the difficulties of serving immigrant families.

Second, the Internet provides you with stores of information in specialized networks upon which you can draw. These networks include the National Parent Information Network (NPIN), Children, Youth, and Family Network and FatherNet. Their information is for two audiences: parents and educators who work with parents. They are about raising children and helping with their schooling.

To navigate this mishmash of networks, it is useful to know about the various tools that people have invented for some people to store the information and other people to retrieve it. The newest and most potent Internet tool is the World Wide Web, or WWW. First, WWW allows you to use earlier tools with a few key strokes. But this convenience is the least of WWW's virtues; its greatest are graphic interface, hypertext and multimedia. With a graphic interface, you can steer through the corridors and browse the storerooms of the Internet with mere clicks of your mouse. You can retrieve and send files also with clicks. When you find a file that interests you, it will probably have hot links pointing to related text either in the same file or in another file perhaps halfway around the world. When you click on a hot link, a new window opens with the new resource that you have summoned.

The World Wide Web offers multimedia that is interactive. Now, the multimedia of WWW is mostly limited to text pages adorned with fancy fonts, photos and clip art, which is still more appealing than the plain typewriter text of yesteryear. Soon, you will be able to view online a video or listen to an audio tape of a parent disciplining her child, for example. Unlike current videos or tapes, these will be interactive, so that if you want to alter the mother's way of disciplining, you can stop the action, retrace her steps, and set her on a different course.

All this electronic wizardry is fine and dandy, but what so what? How does it affect you? If you would rather help people, particularly parents, than play with computers attached to telephone lines, why should you bother? First, you will find the Internet exciting and enjoyable, as many users have discovered. Second, you always need information to do your job well. You need information to understand complex situations, solve complex problems, and make difficult decisions. In short, you need much information. The only issue is where you get the information. You already know your usual information sources— they demand little from you. They are limited, but so is everything. Is it worth your time and trouble to learn to use the Internet?

The answer is yes. You risk several dangers by not learning these tools. First, you shut yourself off from existing stores of knowledge that previously were inaccessible or accessible at great cost. For example, the entire collection of ERIC digests are on the Internet for you to browse and retrieve freely. Just a few years ago, you could not have access to all 1,400 digests, even by writing to the sixteen ERIC Clearinghouses, because some digests are out of print. Second, you shut yourself off from future stores of knowledge that are coming online and are being created just for the Internet. And third, you are part of a dynamic new field: parenting education. No field can grow and mature without an exchange of knowledge. While conferences and workshops are valuable for sharing knowledge, they are costly. How many can you attend in a year? It makes sense that you and others in the field use a dynamic, inexpensive medium (the Internet) to nurture your new field. That presumes, of course, that enough of you would obtain equipment and connectivity to the Internet, and learn to use its tools to communicate with each other.

To exploit the Internet and plunder its riches, you need four things: equipment, connectivity, skills, and courage:

Equipment: Any computer will suffice, no matter how old and slow, as long as it has communication software in it and a modem either inside or attached to it. The modem, in turn, is attached to a regular telephone line which should be dedicated to this purpose or at least only sharing with a fax machine. A fairly fast modem costs about $100; the communication software is usually free with the modem. The additional telephone line is less than $10 per month.

Connectivity: After you get the equipment, you will need to connect to a host computer on the Internet. The cheapest and therefore best way is through your employer, college that you attend, or community service such as library that offers free access. If you are lucky enough to live in a city that has a freenet, such as Cleveland, Urbana-Champaign, or Peoria, then you need only register with the community service and receive your instructions. If you do not have free access, then you should shop for a local Internet provider that is inexpensive and a local telephone call away. If you live in a metropolitan area, you should find at least one. How do you find them? You can inquire at your library or computer store. You can also call me (212/678-3002; 9 am-5 pm est), and I will consult my listings. If you do not have a local provider or want information luxuries that local providers do not offer, then you should subscribe to a national provider such as Adelphi (800/365-4636) or America on Line (703/893-6288). These national services are required if you use the Internet in your travels, but you pay premium prices for services that you may not use. When shopping for a provider, it is critical that you know a provider's capability. Specifically, what Internet tools does it 'support'? If it cannot offer you World Wide Web, for example, then you should consider another service.

Skills: How do you get the knowledge and skills to navigate the Internet? First, you visit your library or bookstore and get a book that explains the Internet. So many have appeared recently that you can choose one at the technical level with which you feel comfortable. You will find many articles about the Internet in newspapers and magazines, but few teach you how to use it and what you will find there. The best monthly source is Internet World (800/573-3062). While you are reading about the Internet, invite yourself along for some rides with friends who already cruise it. After looking over their shoulders, ask if you can take the controls. If they seem reluctant, it is because they are having too much fun to share, not because you could break their computer. Ultimately, you become proficient only by manipulating your own computer and the host computer. You yourself must learn the simple procedures for connecting to your host, logging on and off your host, and of course using the Internet tools. Nobody can do it for you.

Courage: Even those of us who have used computers for years approach the Internet with trepidation if not trembling. However, we screw up our courage, install our communication software, plug in the modem, and make our first call to the host computer. We fumble as do all new users, but we can do no harm to our own computers or the host computers. Soon, we are cruising the Internet. We are flying! We are amazed at the riches available to us. We are amazed also that we can span oceans and continents for the cost of a local telephone call. We cannot do any of these amazing feats, however, if we are too timid to try. Unfortunately, lack of courage, rather than lack of equipment, connectivity, or skills, prevents many people from exploring and settling on this new frontier.

PRESENTER

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A New Paradigm for Parent Involvement

Deborah Zack and Nancy Galarza
Organized Parents Make a Difference, Inc.

INTRODUCTION

Organized Parents Make a Difference represents how a handful of community parents organized themselves to provide after-school programs in Hartford's elementary and middle schools. Parents successfully established a forum through which the complex relationship between parents and schools could be addressed, and parents could begin to form their own agenda.

SUMMARY

Deborah Zack and Nancy Galarza gave a history of Organized Parents Make A Difference, Inc. (OPMAD), and the lessons gleaned from their first year of operation. OPMAD's position on parent empowerment versus involvement was critical to understanding the struggles encountered during this first year in the schools. OPMAD's success in involving hundreds of parents was attributed to the following: 1) it is truly a parent organization representing diverse populations, age groups and belief systems; 2) governance of the organization is the responsibility of the parents; and 3) parents ask other parents to join them in contributing their time and energy.

The presenters offered an analysis of partnerships with schools and families; this analysis requires educators and the system as a whole to examine the role of the school within a community. OPMAD parents believe that schools reflect the community, and that if problems in the community result from inequities, for example, those inequities will be reflected in the schools.

Zack and Galarza believe that schools need to focus on addressing community problems through curriculum, community service, and linkages with organizing campaigns. Parents in the community need to dialogue with school personnel about ways schools reflect and perpetuate the problems of the community. Through such dialogue, schools will learn how to be more responsive to family and community issues.

Most importantly, school boards and staff (unions, etc.) need to endorse the efforts of parent organizations to recruit and train one another for fuller participation in educating children. It is not up to the schools to do this alone, though it is up to schools to ensure that quality education is being produced. Schools need to support the independent efforts of parents. What OPMAD has found to be the key to success is parent to parent outreach and support.

The third and final point in this presentation was made in a discussion about "empowerment." With empowerment comes responsibility. Just as we have a generation of "youth at risk," OPMAD maintains we have "parents at risk." The same principles which are applied to the development of programs serving high risk populations must be applied to programs aimed at parent populations. Focusing on the needs of parents affects three critical systems at once: the family, the school and the community. Expecting parents to be responsible to each other builds support for one another. Empowerment forces one to look at oneself as capable and contributory, rather than powerless and unable. It forces the community to view parents as contributors and providers of services rather than as mere recipients. This is the major paradigm change.

Major discussion focused on "how-tos" for teachers and other school staff. The presenters suggested: joint in-service workshops where parents are expected to attend (employers would be asked to release employees for these); joint work projects (that focus on essential, rather than menial, tasks) where staff and parents work together toward a common goal (i.e., theater, playscapes, community service projects).

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PRESENTERS

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Redefining Parent Involvement: Validating Home Experiences in the Classroom

Rosa Zubizarreta
Developmental Studies Center

INTRODUCTION

The Developmental Studies Center (DSC), a non-profit educational change organization, has developed a set of easy-to-use materials to help classroom teachers foster parental involvement. Since a very significant aspect of our materials is the approach that they embody, we will begin there and then proceed to the details of our program.

Two major aspects of parental involvement are addressed by our program. The first is the need to speak to the circumstances of parents who may have difficulty coming to school, yet who can still contribute greatly to their child's education through the support they can provide at home.

This issue is being raised by many educators who work with cultural and language minority children. For instance, in her book Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education, Sonia Nieto highlights the need to expand the meaning of parent involvement so that it includes parents who might never step foot onto school grounds due to such factors as work schedules, lack of childcare, language barriers, etc., but who nonetheless motivate and encourage their children to succeed in school by communicating with them, providing a supportive environment, and conveying a sense of pride in their home language and culture.

The second, and equally significant, need is to reconceptualize our understanding of parent involvement to include a reciprocal obligation on the part of the school. This obligation consists of ensuring that the classroom curriculum includes and validates parents' knowledge and life- experiences, especially in the case of parents whose cultural or class background is different than the one reflected in the school's curriculum, materials and practices.

SUMMARY

While there has been some interest among educators in the area of culturally appropriate curriculum, it has not been widely recognized that one of the most direct and effective means of providing children with culturally relevant educational experiences is to invite them to share their parents' stories and wisdom in the classroom. This is, indeed, the neglected "other half" of parental involvement. One of the pioneers in this area has been Alma Flor Ada, who in many articles and presentations has explored simple yet effective means by which classroom teachers can acknowledge and honor parents' life experiences (and children's home lives) as a means of bridging the worlds of home and school.

Our materials are designed to address both concerns mentioned above: the need to help parents support their children's education at home, and the need to help the classroom environment recognize and support parents in its curricular activities. These materials were originally created as a result of our experience in the Child Development Project, a research-based school change effort aimed at helping schools become "caring communities of learners." As a consequence, the activities have been thoroughly field-tested and incorporate extensive feedback and suggestions from classroom teachers.

Homeside Activities consist of one-page discussion starters and activity prompts that teachers can send home with children. The activities are designed to foster communication between parents and children by encouraging them to interview each other on certain topics, or to share experiences and opinions on a given theme. The activities are also designed to be an integral part of the life of the classroom. This process begins with ideas for how the teacher can introduce the activity to the class before sending it home, and culminates with suggestions to help students, when they return to the classroom, share and extend the results of the activity they have completed at home.

The activities are available in both Spanish and English. We believe that if schools are to support the "social capital" of the home (as advocated in James Coleman's policy paper Parental Involvement in Education, written for the U.S. Department of Education), it is necessary that schools validate the use of the home language at home, as that is the medium in which parents can best transmit values to their children, and in which children can communicate to their extended family.

DSC's Homeside Activities serve as one model of how this approach to parental involvement can be put in practice. We believe that whatever program a school chooses to implement regarding parental involvement, it needs to be asking the following questions: how can we encourage parents to communicate more with their children, to build supportive relationships with them, and to convey a sense of pride in their home language and heritage? And, how can we include and validate parents' knowledge and life-experience in the curriculum and other school practices, thus affirming the families, cultures, communities and home languages of all students? In many cases, our materials will serve as a useful tool for answering these questions; we hope that, in all cases, they serve as an incentive to give thoughtful consideration to these issues.

PRESENTER

Rosa Zubizarreta is a materials developer for the Developmental Studies Center, as well as a consultant in the field of Bilingual Education.

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In order to gain support from the community and from parents, educators are going to have to learn the lesson that they have not all learned yet; they need to involve parents and the community in other ways than just asking for their help when they need it.
- Don Davies

We need to think hard about how schools can stay focused on education, really partner with communities, opening up their physical assets, like the school building, opening up their minds to new ways of working, opening up their time to be able to work with others and help to learn and teach about the different cultures and how can they work together.
- Angela Blackwell

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